MACAULAY'S ESSAY ON MILTON

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EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFACE

This edition of Macaulay's Essay on Milton is specially intended for students preparing for the Teachers' Certificate Examination. They are required (in the words of the Syllabus) to show "an intelligent acquaintance with the language, style, and subject-matter" of the book prescribed; and these points being precisely those to which every serious student would devote his attention, it is hoped that this edition may prove of use to many besides those for whom it is originally designed.

The essay, though less frequently studied than those on Clive and Hastings, has special points of interest that should win for it a more frequent reading in school and college. Presenting as it does a vivid picture of an interesting period and a unique personality, the very blunders in criticism, exaggerations in statement, and fallacies in argument it contains may be turned to judicious use by the teacher, who will find in them material for training the critical faculty and for developing independent (if not original) thought. The evi-

dences of Macaulay's own second thoughts, collected in the Appendix, should be of considerable value to the student of style.

The text is that of the collected edition of the Essays, issued in 1849. Variations between it and the original form published in the *Edinburgh Review* are given in the Appendix. The paragraphs have been numbered, partly for facility of reference, and partly to emphasize the importance of what is really Macaulay's unit of composition. Both student and teacher will find it well to base each lesson on a definite number of paragraphs.

The notes aim not only at explaining with sufficient fulness all Macaulay's allusions, but at affording the student some guidance in relation to Macaulay's critical judgments.

I am indebted to Mr. George H. Ely for many valuable suggestions with reference to the notes, and in particular I have to thank him for collating the text with the original text of the essay as it appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*.

JOHN DOWNIE.

ABERDEEN,
February, 1899.

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INTRODUCTION

1. LIFE OF MACAULAY.

Thomas Babington Macaulay was born at Rothley Temple, in Leicestershire, on the 25th of October, 1800. He was the eldest child of a family of nine. As his name would suggest, he was of Scottish descent, his grandfather and great-grandfather having been clergymen of the Presbyterian Church in the Western Highlands. His father, Zachary, was an ardent advocate of the freedom of the slave, and a leading member of that small circle of Evangelical Churchmen which, under the name of 'the Clapham sect', became widely known for the piety and philanthropy of its members. His mother, Selina Mills, was of a Quaker family, and had been educated by the sisters of Hannah More, whose school provided the best education available for young ladies at the end of last century. These facts about the parentage of Macaulay should not be overlooked when we try to find an explanation for the religious and political sympathies he revealed when he burst upon the public with his essay on Milton.

At a very early age he showed marvellous precocity, and a memory so extraordinary as to mark him out at once as a prodigy. When still a mere child he was an omnivorous reader and a facile writer. He was educated in private schools, till, at the age of eighteen, he became a student of Trinity College, Cambridge. At the university he continued to give his attention, as he had done at school, entirely to the study of literature. He showed a decided distaste for mathematics, the prevailing study at Cambridge, and failed

so completely to attain proficiency in this subject that he seriously endangered his chances of the highest university distinctions. His brilliant career in classics, however, made up for other deficiencies, and in 1824 he was elected Fellow of his college, thus securing an income of £300 for seven years.

Macaulay had not confined himself to classics during his university career. He had read largely in the literature of modern European nations, especially Italian. He had also acquired a familiarity with English writers that was very uncommon at that time with university students. He found a field for the cultivation of his own literary powers in the Union Debating Society, of which he was the most distinguished member of his time. There he discovered his own gifts as a rhetorician of rare power, and the discovery helped to stamp his writings at the very outset with their peculiar quality—that of argumentative oratory. It is to such a university training—developing, as it did, the literary and rhetorical powers of Macaulay to the stunting of all the other sides of his nature—that we are to attribute most of the excellences and defects that afterwards marked him as a writer.

Macaulay adopted the profession of law, but literature proved more attractive to him. A few contributions to Knight's *Quarterly Magazine* in 1823 and 1824 were sufficient to complete his apprenticeship to the literary art. In his first article in the *Edinburgh Review*, in August, 1825—the 'Essay on Milton'—he appeared as a finished master of the art of expression. "The effect on the author's reputation", says his biographer, Sir George Trevelyan, "was instantaneous. Like Lord Byron, he awoke one morning and found himself famous. The beauties of the work were such as all men could recognise, and its very faults pleased. The redundance of youthful enthusiasm, which he himself unsparingly condemns in the preface to his collected essays, seemed graceful enough in the eyes of others, if it were only as a relief from the perverted ability of that elaborate libel

on our great epic poet which goes by the name of Dr. Johnson's *Life of Milton.* Murray declared that it would be worth the copyright of *Childe Harold* to have Macaulay on the staff of the *Quarterly.* The family breakfast-table in Bloomsbury was covered with cards of invitation to dinner from every quarter of London, and his father groaned in spirit over the conviction that thenceforward the law would be less to him than ever. A warm admirer of Robert Hall, Macaulay heard with pride how the great preacher, then well-nigh worn out with that long disease, his life, was discovered lying on the floor, employed in learning, by aid of grammar and dictionary, enough Italian to enable him to verify the parallel between Milton and Dante. But the compliment that of all others came most nearly home—the only commendation of his literary talent which even in the innermost domestic circle he was ever known to repeat,—was the sentence with which Jeffrey acknowledged the receipt of his manuscript: 'The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style'."

The effects produced by the essay were not confined to the reputation of its author. It revolutionised the form in which review articles were cast. Dean Milman in the short Memoir of his friend says: "On a sudden he broke out with an article on Milton in the *Edinburgh Review*, which perhaps excited greater attention than any article which had ever appeared not immediately connected with the politics of the day. . . . In comprehensiveness of knowledge, in the originality and boldness of his views, in mastery over the whole history and the life of the eventful times of Milton, in variety and felicity of illustration, in vigour, fulness, and vivacity of style, he seemed to make an epoch and a revolution in review-writing. Up to this time, with some excellent exceptions, the articles in reviews had confined themselves to notices, more or less excursive, of new books, and to discussions of the political or polemic questions of the day. The article now aspired to be a full dissertation on the history

of any great period, on the life of any great man of any time, on the writings, on the influence, on the merits of authors of the highest fame. From a review it became an historical, biographical, philosophical essay."

Apart from these two remarkable results, the most noticeable fact about the essay is that the political and literary judgments expressed in it were, like the style, so matured and finished that it is impossible to detect any change or development in them in the later writings of Macaulay. One explanation, no doubt, is that his mind was so purely receptive that, while it showed exhaustless energy in assimilating, it never reacted vigorously—as Carlyle's, for example, did—on the material supplied. His insatiable appetite for books had its weak side: it pointed to an incapacity or disinclination for original thinking. His mind seems to have been absolutely dependent on books for a stimulus to thought. Thus he writes of his crossing to Ireland: "As I could not read, I used an excellent substitute for reading. I went through *Paradise Lost* in my head. I could still repeat half of it, and that the best half."

Another circumstance that may explain his arrested development is the unbroken prosperity that attended his career. Of him might appropriately be said what Ben Jonson said of Bacon:

> "His even thread the Fates spin round and full
> Out of their choicest and their whitest wool".

"His life", says Professor Saintsbury, "was a sort of cascade of fallings on his feet." In everything he attempted in literature and in public life, he attained a distinction and a popularity that are almost unique.

In 1830 he entered Parliament as member for the pocket borough of Calne, and his first speech on the Reform Bill in 1831 at once placed him in the foremost rank as an orator. His share in securing the victory of the Whigs, and in passing the Reform Bill in 1832, was acknowledged by his appointment in that year to the office of Secretary to the Board of

Control. His fame as a parliamentary orator continued to increase, till in 1834 he was appointed president of a law commission for India, and legal member of the Supreme Council of India. Though the inducement to accept these offices was mainly a pecuniary one,—that he might from his salary of £10,000 a year restore the fortunes of the family shattered by the disasters of his father,—he discharged his duties with the utmost efficiency and with exceptional success. The Penal Code prepared by him, and the Code of Criminal Procedure he drafted, have been pronounced by the highest legal authorities as sufficient in themselves to establish his fame as a jurist and to make his name memorable in the history of India.

On his return to England in 1838, with a fortune sufficient for his simple requirements, he wrote more essays for the *Edinburgh Review* (even in India he had written two), began his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, and re-entered Parliament in 1839, now as member for Edinburgh. As Secretary-at-War he joined the Whig ministry of Lord Melbourne, already tottering to its fall, and did all that one man could do to stave off the ruin that befell the Whigs in 1841. He returned to office in 1846 as Paymaster-general, but losing his seat for Edinburgh in 1847, he practically ended his political life in that year. Though re-elected for Edinburgh in 1852 on the initiative, and by the efforts, of the electors themselves, he never again took a prominent part in politics, and finally terminated his political career by resigning his seat in 1856.

Since his return from India, and especially since his release from office in 1841, Macaulay had been gravitating more and more to a purely literary life. He published his *Lays of Ancient Rome* in 1842, and the qualities of simplicity, energy, directness, and force which marked them, secured their immediate and wide popularity. Many of his best essays were also contributed by him at this time to the *Edinburgh Review*, notably those on Temple, Clive, Hastings, Addison, and Chatham. But he ceased to contribute in 1844, as he wished

to concentrate his energies on a work which he had begun in March, 1839—"the *History of England*, from the accession of King James the Second down to a time which is within the memory of men still living". The first two volumes of this, his masterpiece, appeared in 1848, and were received with a favour that recalled the popularity of Byron's poems and Scott's novels. In less than four months 13,000 copies had been sold. It was the greatest of the long series of Macaulay's successes. A like triumph followed on the publication of the second two volumes in 1855. His literary eminence was fittingly recognised. He was elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University in 1848, and he received innumerable honours from learned bodies at home and abroad. In 1857 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Macaulay of Rothley. The short period of life that remained he spent in the continuation of his *History*, but he did not live long enough to carry it down beyond 1700. He died suddenly on the 28th of December, 1859, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. He had noted in his diary on his fifty-first birthday: "I have had a happy life. I do not know that any one, whom I have seen close, has had a happier." These words will be readily endorsed by every reader of his Life, and most, if not all, will be inclined to add that his good fortune was not beyond his deserts.

2. THE ESSAY ON MILTON.

From the synopsis on pages xxxiv and xxxv it will be seen that the Essay divides into two nearly equal portions—the one devoted to literary criticism, the other to a discussion of the political events in which Milton played a part. As in the similar essay on Horace Walpole, the first half is of inferior interest and merit to the second half. Macaulay is at his worst when criticising literature or discussing the first principles of literary art. He recognised the weakness of his own critical faculty. "Such a criticism as that of Goethe in *Wilhelm*

Meister on Hamlet", he wrote, "fills me with wonder and despair." To justify his apprehensions there are too many instances of his failure to appreciate really good writers. His criticisms on Horace Walpole and Boswell, to name only two, must be regarded as extraordinary.

His judgment was not so likely to go astray where his personal sympathies guided his critical faculty. His appreciation of Addison, for example, leaves nothing to be desired. The career, literary tastes, and political opinions of the eighteenth-century Whig formed too close a parallel to those of the nineteenth-century Whig to allow him to err on the side of depreciation. Similarly, the great English writer of the seventeenth century who stood forth in his writings and in his actions as the champion of English liberty, aroused in Macaulay too strong a feeling of admiration to permit of his going far astray in his criticism. The most ardent admirer of Milton will find nothing to charge against Macaulay on the score of lack of appreciation. But, while he sets Milton on a sufficiently high pedestal, fault may be found with some of the devices by which he has sought to raise our estimation of the greatest of our epic poets.

The attempt to show that "no poet has ever triumphed over greater difficulties than Milton" is an absolute failure. After half-a-dozen paragraphs on the thesis that the difficulty of writing poetry increases with the advance of civilization, and that "a great poet must become a little child", we expect to find an exposition of Milton's success in projecting himself back into primitive times, and in adopting the manner of thought and expression peculiar to those times. Do we find this put forward as the secret of Milton's greatness as a poet? On the contrary, we are told, and most justly, that "the most striking characteristic of his poetry is the extreme remoteness of the associations by means of which it acts on the reader". Such a characteristic is possible only in a poet who has innumerable predecessors to supply him with the material by which he produces his effects.

But not only is the reasoning thrown away; it is in itself a tissue of sophistry that reveals Macaulay's limitations as a psychologist. That "the earliest poets are generally the best", and that in an advanced civilization "men make better theories and worse poems", must appear too absurd for discussion. In the early poets we expect the qualities of freshness, force, naturalness, and naïveté, and these qualities we do find—notably in Homer, Chaucer, and the Ballad-writers. But the quality of imagination is something distinct from these. If imagination is that faculty by means of which we recast our own experiences into new forms and creations, it is found quite as active in later poets. Dante, Shakspeare, Goethe are of Homer's rank, but they are not products of a primitive civilization.

The idea that a poet may be born "too late" has been admirably disposed of by Carlyle in a passage that seems to have been a covert answer to Macaulay's reasoning on the point. The passage is one that shows so clearly the difference in critical power between these two great essayists that it may be given at length. "The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the Ideal world is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within it: nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place; for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavours; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes that wander through eternity; and all the mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began to live. . . . Man's life and nature is, as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them. . . . Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite

for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain sort of training. . . . At other times we are told he must be bred in a certain rank. . . . But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poor aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago; inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth, and became no longer attainable by men. Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakspeare or the Burns, unconsciously and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. . . . Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting."[1]

Once clear of the sophistries amid which he is entangled when he attempts to deal with the first principles of criticism, Macaulay is more fortunate in the short appreciations he gives of Milton's poems. The quality he selects as characteristic of them—the suggestiveness of the words and phrases—is one too obvious to be missed. We should have expected, however, some reference to other points, such as the feeling of spaciousness that Lowell has noted as a distinctive mark of Milton's writings. His, indeed, are 'the thoughts that wander through eternity'. All time and all space are taken in to form the background of his great poem. Then there is the point dwelt upon by Matthew Arnold—"Milton's unfailing level of style. Milton has always the sure, strong touch of the master. His power both of diction and of rhythm is unsurpassable. . . . He is our great artist in style, our one first-rate master in the grand style. He is as truly a master in this style as the great Greeks are, or Virgil, or Dante." The 'majestic harmonies' of Milton's blank verse, which poet-critics delight to dwell on, could not be expected to appeal so much to Macaulay, whose own rhythm is simple and occasionally monotonous.

The criticism of each separate poem is sound, though not

[1] Essay on Burns.

suggestive or exhaustive. It is not surprising to find an exaggerated estimate of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, for Macaulay's element is exaggeration. But it is surprising to find him in the judicial mood about *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes*. His remarks on the incongruity of the Ode and the Drama are incontestable; and his characterization of the Greek Drama is just, though in his account of Euripides he is unduly harsh. His appreciation of *Comus* is welcome after Dr. Johnson's frigid remarks on it from his unsympathetic stand-point.

The comparison of Milton with Dante gives us a good illustration of how completely Macaulay acted the part of advocate in his writings. Though he professes impartiality —"we will not take upon ourselves the invidious office of settling precedency between two such writers"—yet his bias in favour of Milton is easily discernible. But in writing about Dante in his *Criticisms on the Principal Italian Writers*, he is equally pronounced in favour of the Italian poet. He says: "I am concerned to see that Mr. Cary, to whom Dante owes more than ever poet owed to translator, has sanctioned an accusation utterly unworthy of his abilities. 'His solicitude', says that gentleman, 'to define all his images in such a manner as to bring them within the circle of our vision, and to subject them to the power of the pencil, renders him little better than grotesque, where Milton has since taught us to expect sublimity.' It is true that Dante has never shrunk from embodying his conceptions in determinate words, that he has even given measures and numbers, where Milton would have left his images to float undefined in a gorgeous haze of language. Both were right. Milton did not profess to have been in heaven or hell. He might therefore reasonably confine himself to magnificent generalities. . . . And I will frankly confess that the vague sublimity of Milton affects me less than these reviled details of Dante. We read Milton; and we know that we are reading a great poet. When we read Dante, the poet vanishes. We are

listening to the man who has returned from 'the valley of the dolorous abyss'; we seem to see the dilated eye of horror, to hear the shuddering accents with which he tells his fearful tale." The contradiction becomes most patent in the contrast between the supernatural creations of the two poets. In this essay Macaulay writes: "Of all the poets who have introduced into their works the agency of supernatural beings, Milton has succeeded best. Here Dante decidedly yields to him; and as this is a point on which many rash and ill-considered judgments have been pronounced", &c. In the earlier essay on the Italian writers he says: "This difficult task of representing supernatural beings to our minds, in a manner which shall be neither unintelligible to our intellects nor wholly inconsistent with our ideas of their nature, has never been so well performed as by Dante. I will refer to three instances",—one being the passage (used in the Essay on Milton to prove Dante's inferiority) concerning Nimrod in the thirty-first canto of the *Inferno*.

The contrast of the personality of the two poets is as great an exaggeration as that drawn between their poetry. It is only by dwelling on the gloomy side of Dante's character, and by closing the eye to the austere side of Milton's, that Macaulay can set off the melancholy of the one with the cheerfulness of the other. A picture the very reverse of this might have been drawn, and no one could have done it better than Macaulay. By contrasting the language of the Italian poet about Beatrice in the *Purgatory* and the *Paradise* with that of the English poet about Delilah in *Samson Agonistes*, he might have drawn a striking contrast between the tenderness of the one that survived all hardening influences, and the harshness of the other which provoked both wife and daughters to forgetfulness of their duty. But the brief Macaulay held was for the other side.

It was the description of Milton's public life rather than the criticism of his poetry that arrested the attention of Macaulay's contemporaries. Never before had there been

so outspoken and so enthusiastic a defence of a party that seemed for ever buried beneath calumny and ridicule. It is difficult for us now after the 'elucidations' of Carlyle and the researches of Masson and Gardiner to realize the courage Macaulay showed in 1825, when in an age of triumphant Toryism he boldly challenged the judgments history and literature had pronounced on Milton and Cromwell. His scathing denunciation of the restored Stuarts and his glowing picture of the despised Puritan stand out in the essay, not indeed as purple patches, but as the most vivid and thrilling parts of what is throughout written at a white heat of enthusiasm and admiration. The spirit and animation with which Macaulay challenges all comers to the controversy of the Stuarts *versus* Liberty, should be a sufficient refutation of those who have charged him with a lack of deep feeling or sustained emotion. One thing at least had power to move Macaulay's soul to its depths, and that was the thought of his country. The intensity of his feeling is marked by the essay assuming more distinctly at this point the quality so characteristic of all his writing—the quality of spoken oratory. He falls unconsciously into the argumentative and perorating mood, and gathers force and animation under the stimulus of an imaginary opponent and imaginary listeners.

Very noteworthy is the skill with which he argues against his imaginary opponent. No more crushing retort can be given in a debate than to use an opponent's own arguments for the demolition of his own case. So here Macaulay has shown the anti-Catholic Tory of 1825, who boasted of his devotion to Revolution principles, that according to these principles he must approve of the action of the earlier generation of statesmen who resisted despotism. But while we admire the brilliant display of the forensic art, we cannot fail to detect a few weak points in the argument. The attempt to make out the Revolution as purely political on the ground of the famous resolution passed by Parliament in

1688, cannot succeed with anyone who remembers that James II.'s attack on the Church of England was one of the decisive acts leading up to the invitation to the Prince of Orange. The parallel between the Revolution and the Rebellion is not so neat and complete, when we observe that in the latter the Church of England was attacked as much as the King, while in the former the King stood alone against State and Church united. In one other point there is an all-important distinction between the Rebellion and the Revolution. The one was a failure, and the other was a success.

It is easy to argue that logically the two movements were identical: it might even be contended that the Rebellion is more deserving of admiration because of the race of giants who figured in it, and because of the more unflinching and logical way in which they carried out their principles. But in practical politics logic counts for little. The doctrinaire never learns the great lesson of statesmanship, that to be out of touch with the people through advancing too quickly is as disastrous to progress as to fall out of touch through lagging behind. It was because the statesmen of the Revolution thought, not only about the principles of liberty and the social contract, but also about the necessity of carrying public opinion with them, that they achieved a triumph where their more ambitious predecessors had failed. They hit upon the right path, which the men of the Rebellion had been groping for, but had missed. The misgovernment of Charles I. might be very like that of his son, but the resistance offered to the two kings differed. In the one, the nation was practically unanimous; in the other, the king was supported by nearly one half of his subjects, and as his power and his cause drooped his supporters and sympathizers increased. The execution of Charles I., which seemed fatal to the Royalist cause, did more for it than all the victories of Rupert and Montrose. It was an act that appealed to men not entirely through logic. Many were so

unreasonable as to be moved by their feelings, and the tide of public opinion turned against the triumphant army. A republic based on military support could last only so long as the army leaders were united among themselves, and with their dissensions the collapse of the unstable structure immediately ensued. The failure that thus attended the first attempt in the seventeenth century to curb despotism and establish liberty, is the verdict of history condemning the movement. The success of the second attempt at the end of the century is the justification of the Revolution movement.

The soundness of Macaulay's statesmanship prevents him from justifying the execution of the king, and he assigns the true reason for regarding it as a blunder, when he says that "the great body of the people contemplated it with feelings which, however unreasonable, no government could safely venture to outrage". But the same test of the legitimacy of a political act—whether it commended itself to the public opinion of the time—might be applied to many other acts of the Parliamentary party, and the same judgment would have to be pronounced. The importance of securing public opinion on the side of government is put forward by Macaulay as a sufficient excuse for Milton's writing in defence of the execution of the king. But the argument that exculpates Milton on this particular charge cannot be used without condemning his party for not guarding against the outraging of public opinion by their general policy.

The defence of Cromwell is one of the best examples of Macaulay's skill as an advocate. Every fact that can put Cromwell in a favourable light is artfully introduced, while his arbitrary acts are passed over or palliated. If the policy of Cromwell was infinitely wiser and more successful than that of Charles I., his methods of government showed little improvement on those of his predecessor. Charles imprisoned members of Parliament, and attempted to arrest them even in the House itself; Cromwell excluded the greater part of the Long Parliament and expelled the miserable Rump that

remained. Charles dissolved three parliaments in anger; Cromwell had no better fortune with three parliaments of his own making. Charles resorted to illegal taxation; Cromwell quartered his major-generals on the disaffected. In one respect, indeed, the country fared worse under Cromwell than under Charles. Charles had violated popular rights, but there remained the constitution, which under his successor might become the guarantee of liberty and good government; but under Cromwell everything hung on one man's life, with nothing but confusion and disorder in sight when death should snap that frail thread. So far is it from being true, as Macaulay asserts, that "the events which followed his decease are the most complete vindication of those who exerted themselves to uphold his authority", that the very opposite is the truth. The most serious charge against Cromwell is, that by abrogating the old constitution and failing to provide a sound new one, he exposed the country to the dangers that actually overtook it on his death. Of course, there was the chance—an infinitesimal one—that by twenty years' strong government, with peace at home and victory abroad, Cromwell might have won to himself the devoted support of the great majority of the nation. But the chance was far too remote to justify the superseding of all constitutions by arbitrary power based on military support. "The military rule," says Gardiner, "which Cromwell was never able to shake off, endangered the permanence of his system, and must have endangered it, even if, as his unreasoning worshippers fondly urge, his span of life had been prolonged for twenty years. It is the condition on which all strong intellectual and spiritual movements rest, that they shall be spontaneous."[1] Here we have the final and irrefutable argument that disposes of Macaulay's defence: "Had he lived a few years longer, it is probable that his institutions would have survived him, and that his arbitrary practice would have died with him".

[1] *Cromwell's Place in History*, p. 111.

The only defensible arguments in favour of Cromwell are: (1) that military government was the only possible one in the circumstances, and (2) that he did all in his power to establish a constitution, or, in his own words, to have a settlement. These considerations alone would be sufficient to explain, if not justify, Milton's defence of 'a military usurper'. But when we remember further the strong bond between the two men in their common hold of the principle of toleration and freedom of thought, we can understand, not only how Milton accepted office under Cromwell, but also how he was one of his most enthusiastic admirers. "In speaking of a man so great," writes Milton, "and who has deserved so signally of this commonwealth, I shall have done nothing if I merely acquit him of having committed any crime, especially since it concerns not only the commonwealth, but myself individually, as one so closely conjoined in the same infamy, to show to all nations and ages, as far as I can, the supreme excellence of his character, and his supreme worthiness of all praise."[1]

The description of the political parties of the time shows Macaulay at his best. The character of the Puritan gave him abundance of scope for his display of antithesis and epigram. No finer portrait has ever been drawn of a most extraordinary type of mankind: not even Carlyle has surpassed Macaulay in this particular instance. It is often charged against Macaulay, and with truth, that his descriptions of men are too 'objective'; but here we have the very soul of the Puritan laid bare. The marvellous success of his portrait of one of the great political parties may have led him to be magnanimous in his treatment of the Cavaliers. If the picture of the Royalist is pale beside that of the Puritan, it is not because Macaulay has failed to do justice to an opponent, but because there were not the same materials in the one case as in the other. The pictures are drawn, not as a mere feat of word-painting, but because no happier device could have been thought of

[1] *Defensio Secunda.*

for representing to us Milton to the very life. It might be objected that no account is taken of Milton's own change of views at different periods of his life—of the different phases he passed through as Puritan Churchman, anti-Church Puritan, Presbyterian, Independent, and Solitary. But it is a sufficient answer that, in giving what is avowedly a picture, the artist is entitled to assume that the object he draws is fixed.

However critics may disagree about Milton's poetry, and politicians may denounce him for his attitude to the events of his time, all will unite with Macaulay in regarding it as Milton's special glory to have been the champion of forlorn hopes and desperate causes. The cosmogony and the theology of *Paradise Lost* must become increasingly distasteful to new generations, but Milton's courageous defence of liberty of thought will always secure for him the admiration even of those who can find in him nothing else to admire.

Though it is possible to pick holes in most of Macaulay's essays, especially in this, his earliest, it is altogether unjustifiable to pronounce them worthless so far as subject-matter is concerned. "On any subject which Macaulay has touched," says Professor Saintsbury, "his survey is unsurpassable for giving a first bird's-eye view, and for creating interest in the matter. . . . His Pisgah sights are admirable."[1] Similarly Mark Pattison writes: "His Essays are not merely instructive as history; they are, like Milton's blank verse, freighted with the spoils of all the ages. They are literature as well as history. In their diversified contents the Essays are a library by themselves: for those who, having little time for study, want one book which may be a substitute for many, we should recommend the Essays in preference to anything else."[2] But no one has defined the place of Macaulay's Essays in literature so well as Cotter Morison. "The historical essay, as he conceived it, was as good as unknown before him. To take a bright period or personage of history,

[1] *Corrected Impressions*, p. 88. [2] *Ency. Brit.*, Art. 'Macaulay'.

to frame it in a firm outline, to conceive it at once in article-size, and then to fill in this limited canvas with sparkling anecdote, telling bits of colour, and facts all fused together by a real genius for narrative, was the sort of genre painting which Macaulay applied to history. . . . Slight, or even trivial, in the field of historical erudition and critical inquiry, they are masterpieces if regarded in the light of great popular cartoons on subjects taken from modern history."[1]

3. THE STYLE OF THE ESSAY.

The style of the essay has been criticised by Macaulay himself in the Preface to the Collected Edition of his Essays. He says: "The criticism on Milton, which was written when the author was fresh from college, and which contains scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approves, still remains overloaded with gaudy and ungraceful ornament". Although the fault he refers to is sufficiently obvious, the fact remains, as has already been pointed out, that the style of the essay immediately attracted universal attention. One has only to read the pretentious periods in the articles of Jeffrey, the veteran critic of the time, or Brougham's intricate paragraphs, bespattered with parentheses, to understand the relief with which readers would welcome the clear, crisp, emphatic sentences of Macaulay. It was no light task to tackle a review by Jeffrey when one might find oneself, as in the well-known passage on the Genius of Shakspeare, in the midst of a sentence 322 words long. Or, in the case of Brougham, one might find pages devoted to a single sentence with a lavish sprinkling of dashes that marked in a picturesque and graphic way the disjointedness and involution of the thought—when there was any. Macaulay never subjected his readers to such trials. From the first he never wrote a sentence the meaning of which was not obvious at the first reading. There is not

[1] 'Macaulay', *English Men of Letters Series*, p. 68.

a trick or mannerism in all his later works which may not be found in the essay on Milton. It is surprising enough that Macaulay should have struck out for himself—'picked up', as Jeffrey put it—a style so marked and so well suited to captivate all readers. But it is still more surprising that he should have come forth with this style fully developed from the first, like Minerva springing forth from Jupiter, a goddess armed at all points.

The popularity of Macaulay's style is proved, not only by the enormous circulation of his works, but also by the numberless attempts at imitation which it provoked. It is not too much to say that his style has become the model for all journalists and expositors,—for all who want to command the ready attention of a wide and popular audience on every-day topics. The faults and disadvantages of the style are glaring enough, but if the popular verdict be decisive in such a matter—as, surely, it ought to be—there is no style more deserving of the student's careful attention and assiduous imitation. We must study other writers for the highest qualities of prose style: Dryden, for masculine energy and impetuous directness; Addison, for refinement, delicacy, and humour; Burke, for unequalled splendour of imagery. De Quincey draws out all the music and the melody of words; Lamb has concentrated in himself all the quaintness and drollery that lurk in our older writers like Fuller and Browne; Carlyle has given us the supreme example of Titanic energy and undisciplined force. But no writer in the whole range of English literature will give us a style with more *serviceable* qualities than Macaulay. Not one person in a thousand will ever need to write with any other qualities of style than Clearness and Vividness, and the great master for these homely and despised, but essential and rare, excellences is Macaulay.

That Clearness or Intelligibility is a necessary quality of style is readily admitted by every one. Whatever is written is presumably intended to be read. The reader's task, therefore, should be made easy, by the selecting of such

words and the arranging of them in such constructions, as will make the writer's meaning intelligible at a glance. "Economize the reader's attention": that is Herbert Spencer's summary of the rules of composition. Just as the style of handwriting most cultivated at present is that which is the most legible, so the style of composition to be aimed at should be, above all things, absolutely clear and intelligible. But the writer's task is only half done when he has put his subject-matter into the most suitable form; he must use every device to stimulate the mind of his reader so that every point will be eagerly grasped and easily retained. The Vigour and Animation of the style must bring the reader into the closest possible contact with the mind of the writer who has already come half-way by the clear arrangement of his thought.

An analysis of the devices used by Macaulay to attain to his matchless combination of Clearness and Force, forms the best training in Composition that can be given to any one. The student should especially note the following points: the kind and number of the words Macaulay uses; the length and arrangement of his sentences; the structure and sequence of his paragraphs; and his use of the Figures of Speech.

In his choice of words Macaulay is not hampered by a predilection like Johnson's for words of Latin origin, or like Freeman's for words derived from the Anglo-Saxon. He chooses always the most serviceable word—that which most clearly and forcibly expresses his meaning. He does not need to go outside the English language for a word to express all that he has to say; he neither borrows from foreign languages nor coins new words in his own. He may use a homely expression—as in this essay, 'fee-faw-fum'—rather than have his point missed, but he has a healthy detestation of slang. If he must use a doubtful word, he will guard himself by some saving phrase, as in the essay on Walpole—"there are scarcely any of those passages which, *in our school-days*, we used to call *skip*". He always selected the

most telling word, because with his extraordinary memory he could draw upon an inexhaustible vocabulary. It was the wealth of his vocabulary that saved him from the vice of verbosity. He was profuse in his illustrations, not diffuse in his language. It is really poverty of language that causes the lavish waste of words. If the one right word is missed, the meaning is perforce expressed by a circumlocution. One secret of Macaulay's animation is to be found in the precision and conciseness of his language.

It is in the length and arrangement of the sentence that we find the most striking characteristic of Macaulay's style. His short, emphatic sentence has become proverbial. The long sentence rarely occurs, and when it does, it is as a set-off to a series of short, staccato sentences that have gone before or are to follow immediately. Even in a long sentence, the construction is never involved, much less heterogeneous. Its length is due to the piling on of phrases of the same sort, rather than to the addition of clauses of diverse rank. The examiner who wishes to find a difficult passage in grammatical analysis, can range no poorer hunting-ground than Macaulay's essays. Sentence after sentence is 'simple'; the 'complex', when found, presents no difficulty, even to a beginner.

The arrangement of Macaulay's sentence especially conduces to vividness and force. His style is emphatically 'pointed': he delights in balance, antithesis, epigram. Not only is word set off against word and phrase against phrase, but clause is balanced against clause and sentence against sentence. The first half of the sentence frequently suggests what the second half is to be. The reader's task is thus made easy, when the mind can anticipate, as in Pope's heroic couplet, what is to be said in the latter half of the sentence. This balanced arrangement naturally leads to pointed contrasts in the two halves of the sentence, and in extreme cases to epigrams. Thus we have the following:—

"A good constitution is infinitely better than the best despot."

"The government had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute."

"He who . . . aspires to be a great poet, must first become a little child."

By this juxtaposition of opposites the greatest prominence is given to each element in the contrast, and the reader's attention is instantaneously seized.

In the arrangement of the paragraph, Macaulay's art is easily seen. In the opening sentence he often states with emphasis what the subject is to be. If, for the sake of variety and in order to arouse attention, he has started away from the subject, he does not keep us long in suspense as to what his main point is. If the paragraph is descriptive, the sentences fall into an ascending series, till at last we have a flowing period, in which epithet is piled upon epithet and phrase rolls after phrase, so that we are overwhelmed in the full tide of his eloquence.[1] If the paragraph is argumentative, after maintaining his point—too often with unnecessary iteration and superfluous illustration—he clenches it with one of his curt, emphatic sentences, that never seem so dogmatic or final as when they appear at the close of a paragraph. The judge has given his decision. The last word on the question has been spoken.[2]

The sequence of his paragraphs should be carefully studied. Not only does he confine himself rigidly in each paragraph to one particular point, but one paragraph follows another in the most strictly logical order. The last sentence in one usually supplies the point of departure in the next. To bring out his linking of paragraphs the student should write a précis of each one; only by so doing can he fully appreciate the strictness with which Macaulay has adhered to the logical sequence of the different parts of his subject.

Figures of Speech are used by Macaulay freely—especially in this essay—and they are introduced always with the

[1] For examples, see Paragraphs 43, 46, 50, 78, 83, 93, 94.

[2] For examples, see Paragraphs 10, 12, 14, 15, 25, 27, 48, 60, 87.

same object, to add to the clearness and vividness of his pictures and his arguments. What he has said of Dante's similes is true of his own. "They are introduced in a plain, business-like manner; not for the sake of any beauty in the objects from which they are drawn; not for the sake of any ornament which they may impart; but simply in order to make the meaning of the writer as clear to the reader as it is to himself." The figures he uses most frequently are the Simile, the Metaphor, Metonymy, and Antithesis. The parallel instance, though not strictly a figure of speech, may be included in the same class as a device for saving intellectual labour. Macaulay's fondness for this device arose from his command over an inexhaustible stock of illustrations gathered from the most various sources. His difficulty seems to have been to stop pouring them out one after another. "He goes on blackening the chimney," says Mr. Leslie Stephen, "with a persistency which somehow amuses us because he puts so much heart into his work." The plethora of parallel instances may be excused, however, on the ground that Macaulay, like the orator, used many illustrations so that any reader who failed to grasp one of them might have a chance of getting hold of another. And any one who understood them all would, by the reiteration, have the clearest and most vivid impression of what Macaulay intended to convey. His pictorial and concrete style succeeded. For the first time young ladies preferred a book of history to a novel, and for the first time a body of working men recorded a vote of thanks to an historian for writing a history which they could understand.

The faults of Macaulay's style have often been pointed out. The abruptness of his transitions is sometimes disconcerting, as in Paragraph 38, where he suddenly asks "What is spirit?" and in Paragraph 70, where he begins with "Ariosto tells a pretty story of a fairy". But there is no instance so extreme as in the essay on Addison, where, amid the illustrations of the popularity of the tragedy of Cato, he

opens a paragraph in the orthodox style of the mediæval poem and the modern novel, "It was April". The jerkiness of his short sentences is painful; for example, in Paragraph 75,

"The deed was done. It could not be undone.";

in Paragraph 77,

"Sect raved against sect. Party plotted against party."

But the dislocation becomes intolerable when two members of a sentence, logically inseparable, are put into two distinct sentences, as in Paragraph 54,

"But mention the miseries of Ireland. Then William is a hero.";

and in Paragraph 39,

"Logicians may reason about abstractions. But the great mass of men must have images."

One evil consequence of these curt sentences is that all statements, principal and subordinate alike, are put forward with equal and unrelieved emphasis. Though each by itself gains in clearness by the device, there is a loss in the total effect of a paragraph. The attempt to be emphatic also leads to exaggeration—"a stimulant that stimulates till it loses its power". One hyperbole in the essay may be noted, that about Milton's conception of love in Paragraph 47. The perpetually recurring antithesis, and the constant glitter of epigram, become monotonous and even irritating, when we discover that what is thereby gained in emphasis is lost in truth. The brilliancy is of the hard, metallic sort, absolutely incompatible with the finer qualities of elasticity and flexibility. The superabundance of illustration, however, is what the unfriendly critic and the mocking parodist have turned to best account in ridiculing Macaulay's style.

But while his faults stand out 'plain and palpable as a mountain', after all deductions have been made, there remain sufficient excellences in his style to make it worthy of careful study. Professor Saintsbury's opinion on the point will carry

weight with it: "Fatiguing as his 'snip-snap' sometimes is, yet any one who speaks of Macaulay's style with contempt seems to me to proclaim himself fatally and finally as a mere 'one-eyed' man in literary appreciation". A similar judgment has been given by Mr. Frederic Harrison, the most recent critic of Macaulay. He says: "The style, with all its defects, has had a solid success and has done great things. By clothing his historical judgments and his critical reflections in these cutting and sonorous periods, he has forced them on the attention of a vast body of readers wherever English is read at all, and on millions who have neither time nor attainments for any regular studies of their own. How many men has Macaulay succeeded in reaching, to whom all other history and criticism is a closed book, or a book in an unknown tongue! If he were a sciolist or a wrong-headed fanatic, this would be a serious evil. But, as he is substantially right in his judgments, brimful of saving common-sense and generous feeling, and profoundly well read in his own periods and his favourite literature, Macaulay has conferred most memorable services on the readers of English throughout the world. He stands between philosophic historians and the public very much as journals and periodicals stand between the masses and great libraries. Macaulay is a glorified journalist and reviewer, who brings the matured results of scholars to the man in the street in a form that he can remember and enjoy, when he could not make use of a merely learned book. He performs the office of the ballad-maker or story-teller in an age before books were known or were common. And it is largely due to his influence that the best journals and periodicals of our day are written in a style so clear, so direct, so resonant. We need not imitate his mannerism; we may all learn to be outspoken, lucid, and brisk."[1] Thus the unqualified depreciation and unsparing contempt in which a former generation of critics indulged in their reviews of Macaulay's style, are now giving way to a more impartial

[1] *Early Victorian Literature*, pp. 85, 86.

judgment and to a more generous acknowledgment of its undoubted merits. One thing is indisputable: Macaulay stands out as a master and a model of the art of exposition. This one excellence may be insufficient by itself to secure for him the highest rank as a writer of prose, but it ought to explain and to justify the popularity of one who has been more widely read than almost any other in the long and brilliant roll of English authors.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ESSAY.

Introduction, dealing with the Treatise on Christian Doctrine (1–7).

A. Milton's Poetry (8–48).

His place among poets (8); his difficulty from being "an age too late" (9).

Poetry declines as civilization advances (10–18).

Milton's learning an obstacle to his success as a poet, but "his imagination triumphed over every obstacle" (19–20).

Excellence of Milton's poetry (21); its magical influence or occult power (22–24).

L'Allegro and *Il Penseroso*, "collections of hints" (25).

Comus and *Samson Agonistes* compared (26–30); both lyric poems in the form of plays in imitation of the Greek drama (27–28), but *Comus* more successful as more distinctly lyrical (29–30).

Paradise Regained (31).

Paradise Lost compared with Dante's *Divine Comedy* (32–47).

1. Milton gives 'dim intimations' where Dante gives exact details (33–35); *e.g.* the measure of Satan (34), the lazar-house (35).

2. Dante writes as one giving a personal narrative, while Milton describes *ab extra* (36).

3. Milton in his treatment of the supernatural is mysterious and picturesque; Dante is so minutely picturesque as to exclude mystery, *e.g.* "his angels are good men with wings" (37–42).

Digression to compare Milton's spiritual creations with those of Æschylus, especially Satan with Prometheus (43).

4. Milton reveals a personality marked by loftiness of spirit; Dante, one marked by intensity of feeling (44–47).

Sonnets; they especially reveal Milton's personality (48–49).

B. Milton's Public Life (50–94).

Importance of the time at which he lived (50).

Milton, the champion of English liberty; a cause injured in literature by its friends as much as by its foes (51).

1. Was Milton's conduct justifiable? part of a larger question, Was the resistance to Charles I. justifiable? as justifiable as the Revolution of 1688 (52–72).

The parallel between the two cases not affected by Charles's Protestantism (53).

The Revolution not a Protestant Revolution (54–55) but a protest against tyranny (56).

Charles I. as guilty as James II. of breaking the fundamental laws (57), and as unreliable (58), even more so after his violation of the Petition of Right (59–60).

Charles I.'s personal and domestic virtues no excuse for his misgovernment (61–63).

Charles I. was not acting in defence of long-established prerogative (64).

The crimes and follies of revolutionary periods outweighed by the benefits they bring (66–72).

2. Milton's attitude with regard to the execution of Charles I. (73–75).

Armed resistance to James II. as bad as regicide (73).

The execution of Charles I. not a crime but a blunder (74).

Milton's defence of it justifiable (75).

3. Milton's relation to Cromwell justified (76–78). Defence of Cromwell (76). Cromwell preferable to the Stuarts the only alternative (77–78).

4. Milton's relation to the parties of the time (79–87).

(*a*) Puritans described: their weaknesses and absurdities (80–81); the closeness of their life with God (82); the two different men in the Puritan, the manward and the Godward (83); their vices outweighed by their virtues (84).

(*b*) Freethinkers described: "the Heathens", "doubting Thomases and careless Gallios" (85).

(*c*) Royalists described: superior to the Puritans in social qualities and in learning (86).

Milton combined the best qualities in all three parties (87).

5. The special glory of Milton's public life—that he fought alone for the freedom of the human mind, the liberty of the press, and the right of private judgment (88–90).

The prose works referred to generally (91–92).

Description of Milton's personal appearance (93), and final estimate of his character (94).

LEADING DATES IN MILTON'S LIFE.

1608. Milton born in London.
1625–32. At Cambridge University.
1632. Retires to Horton in Buckinghamshire.
1632–33. *L'Allegro; Il Penseroso; Arcades.*
1634. *Comus.*
1637. *Lycidas.*
1638–39. Travels on the Continent, chiefly in Italy.
1641. Controversial works in prose: *Of Reformation in England Prelatical Episcopacy; Reason of Church Government, Animadversions on the Remonstrant.*
1642. Civil War begins.
1643. Marriage with Mary Powell.
1644. *Tractate on Education; Areopagitica; Divorce Pamphlets.*
1649. Latin secretary under the Commonwealth; *Eikonoklastes*, &c.
1651. *Defensio pro populo Anglicano.*
1654. *Defensio Secunda.*
1656. Second Marriage.
1660. The Restoration. Milton in retirement.
1667. *Paradise Lost.*
1671. *Paradise Regained; Samson Agonistes.*
1674. Death of Milton (8th November).

ESSAY ON MILTON.

Joannis Miltoni, Angli, de Doctrinâ Christianâ libri duo posthumi. A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone. By JOHN MILTON, translated from the Original by Charles R. Sumner, M.A., &c. &c. 1825.

§ 1. TOWARDS the close of the year 1823, Mr. Lemon, deputy-keeper of the state papers, in the course of his researches among the presses of his office, met with a large Latin manuscript. With it were found corrected copies of the foreign despatches written by Milton, while he filled the office of Secretary, and several papers relating to the Popish trials and the Rye-house Plot. The whole was wrapped up in an envelope, superscribed *To Mr. Skinner, Merchant.* On examination, the large manuscript proved to be the long lost Essay on the Doctrines of Christianity, which, according to Wood and Toland, Milton finished after the Restoration, and deposited with Cyriac Skinner. Skinner, it is well known, held the same political opinions with his illustrious friend. It is therefore probable, as Mr. Lemon conjectures, that he may have fallen under the suspicions of the government during that persecution of the Whigs which followed the dissolution of the Oxford parliament, and that, in consequence of a general seizure of his papers, this work may have been brought to the office in which it has been found. But whatever the adventures of the

manuscript may have been, no doubt can exist that it is a genuine relic of the great poet.

§ 2. Mr. Sumner, who was commanded by his Majesty to edit and translate the treatise, has acquitted himself of his task in a manner honourable to his talents and to his character. His version is not indeed very easy or elegant; but it is entitled to the praise of clearness and fidelity. His notes abound with interesting quotations, and have the rare merit of really elucidating the text. The preface is evidently the work of a sensible and candid man, firm in his own religious opinions, and tolerant towards those of others.

§ 3. The book itself will not add much to the fame of Milton. It is, like all his Latin works, well written, though not exactly in the style of the prize essays of Oxford and Cambridge. There is no elaborate imitation of classical antiquity, no scrupulous purity, none of the ceremonial cleanness which characterizes the diction of our academical Pharisees. The author does not attempt to polish and brighten his composition into the Ciceronian gloss and brilliancy. He does not, in short, sacrifice sense and spirit to pedantic refinements. The nature of his subject compelled him to use many words

> "That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp".

But he writes with as much ease and freedom as if Latin were his mother tongue; and, where he is least happy, his failure seems to arise from the carelessness of a native, not from the ignorance of a foreigner. We may apply to him what Denham with great felicity says of Cowley. He wears the garb, but not the clothes of the ancients.

§ 4. Throughout the volume are discernible the traces of a powerful and independent mind, emanci-

pated from the influence of authority, and devoted to the search of truth. Milton professes to form his system from the Bible alone; and his digest of scriptural texts is certainly among the best that have appeared. But he is not always so happy in his inferences as in his citations.

§ 5. Some of the heterodox doctrines which he avows seem to have excited considerable amazement, particularly his Arianism, and his theory on the subject of polygamy. Yet we can scarcely conceive that any person could have read the Paradise Lost without suspecting him of the former; nor do we think that any reader, acquainted with the history of his life, ought to be much startled at the latter. The opinions which he has expressed respecting the nature of the Deity, the eternity of matter, and the observation of the Sabbath, might, we think, have caused more just surprise.

§ 6. But we will not go into the discussion of these points. The book, were it far more orthodox or far more heretical than it is, would not much edify or corrupt the present generation. The men of our time are not to be converted or perverted by quartos. A few more days, and this essay will follow the *Defensio Populi* to the dust and silence of the upper shelf. The name of its author, and the remarkable circumstances attending its publication, will secure to it a certain degree of attention. For a month or two it will occupy a few minutes of chat in every drawing-room, and a few columns in every magazine; and it will then, to borrow the elegant language of the play-bills, be withdrawn, to make room for the forthcoming novelties.

§ 7. We wish, however, to avail ourselves of the interest, transient as it may be, which this work has excited. The dexterous Capuchins never choose to

preach on the life and miracles of a saint, until they have awakened the devotional feelings of their auditors by exhibiting some relic of him, a thread of his garment, a lock of his hair, or a drop of his blood. On the same principle, we intend to take advantage of the late interesting discovery, and, while this memorial of a great and good man is still in the hands of all, to say something of his moral and intellectual qualities. Nor, we are convinced, will the severest of our readers blame us if, on an occasion like the present, we turn for a short time from the topics of the day, to commemorate, in all love and reverence, the genius and virtues of John Milton, the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English liberty.

§ 8. It is by his poetry that Milton is best known; and it is of his poetry that we wish first to speak. By the general suffrage of the civilized world, his place has been assigned among the greatest masters of the art. His detractors, however, though outvoted, have not been silenced. There are many critics, and some of great name, who contrive in the same breath to extol the poems and to decry the poet. The works they acknowledge, considered in themselves, may be classed among the noblest productions of the human mind. But they will not allow the author to rank with those great men who, born in the infancy of civilization, supplied, by their own powers, the want of instruction, and, though destitute of models themselves, bequeathed to posterity models which defy imitation. Milton, it is said, inherited what his predecessors created; he lived in an enlightened age; he received a finished education; and we must therefore, if we would form a just estimate of his powers, make large deductions in consideration of these advantages.

§ 9. We venture to say, on the contrary, paradoxical as the remark may appear, that no poet has ever had to struggle with more unfavourable circumstances than Milton. He doubted, as he has himself owned, whether he had not been born "an age too late". For this notion Johnson has thought fit to make him the butt of much clumsy ridicule. The poet, we believe, understood the nature of his art better than the critic. He knew that his poetical genius derived no advantage from the civilization which surrounded him, or from the learning which he had acquired; and he looked back with something like regret to the ruder age of simple words and vivid impressions.

§ 10. We think that, as civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines. Therefore, though we fervently admire those great works of imagination which have appeared in dark ages, we do not admire them the more because they have appeared in dark ages. On the contrary, we hold that the most wonderful and splendid proof of genius is a great poem produced in a civilized age. We cannot understand why those who believe in that most orthodox article of literary faith, that the earliest poets are generally the best, should wonder at the rule as if it were the exception. Surely the uniformity of the phenomenon indicates a corresponding uniformity in the cause.

§ 11. The fact is, that common observers reason from the progress of the experimental sciences to that of the imitative arts. The improvement of the former is gradual and slow. Ages are spent in collecting materials, ages more in separating and combining them. Even when a system has been formed, there is still something to add, to alter, or to reject. Every generation enjoys the use of a vast hoard bequeathed to it by antiquity, and transmits that hoard, augmented

by fresh acquisitions, to future ages. In these pursuits, therefore, the first speculators lie under great disadvantages, and, even when they fail, are entitled to praise. Their pupils, with far inferior intellectual powers, speedily surpass them in actual attainments. Every girl who has read Mrs. Marcet's little dialogues on Political Economy could teach Montague or Walpole many lessons in finance. Any intelligent man may now, by resolutely applying himself for a few years to mathematics, learn more than the great Newton knew after half a century of study and meditation.

§ 12. But it is not thus with music, with painting, or with sculpture. Still less is it thus with poetry. The progress of refinement rarely supplies these arts with better objects of imitation. It may indeed improve the instruments which are necessary to the mechanical operations of the musician, the sculptor, and the painter. But language, the machine of the poet, is best fitted for his purpose in its rudest state. Nations, like individuals, first perceive, and then abstract. They advance from particular images to general terms. Hence the vocabulary of an enlightened society is philosophical, that of a half-civilized people is poetical.

§ 13. This change in the language of men is partly the cause and partly the effect of a corresponding change in the nature of their intellectual operations, of a change by which science gains and poetry loses. Generalization is necessary to the advancement of knowledge; but particularly is indispensable to the creations of the imagination. In proportion as men know more and think more, they look less at individuals and more at classes. They therefore make better theories and worse poems. They give us vague phrases instead of images, and personified qualities

instead of men. They may be better able to analyse human nature than their predecessors. But analysis is not the business of the poet. His office is to portray, not to dissect. He may believe in a moral sense, like Shaftesbury; he may refer all human actions to self-interest, like Helvetius; or he may never think about the matter at all. His creed on such subjects will no more influence his poetry, properly so called, than the notions which a painter may have conceived respecting the lachrymal glands, or the circulation of the blood, will affect the tears of his Niobe, or the blushes of his Aurora. If Shakespeare had written a book on the motives of human actions, it is by no means certain that it would have been a good one. It is extremely improbable that it would have contained half so much able reasoning on the subject as is to be found in the Fable of the Bees. But could Mandeville have created an Iago? Well as he knew how to resolve characters into their elements, would he have been able to combine those elements in such a manner as to make up a man, a real, living, individual man?

§ 14. Perhaps no person can be a poet, or can even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind, if anything which gives so much pleasure ought to be called unsoundness. By poetry we mean not all writing in verse, nor even all good writing in verse. Our definition excludes many metrical compositions which, on other grounds, deserve the highest praise. By poetry we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colours. Thus the greatest of poets has described it, in lines universally admired for the vigour and felicity of their diction, and still more valuable on

account of the just notion which they convey of the art in which he excelled:

> "As imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name".

§ 15. These are the fruits of the "fine frenzy" which he ascribes to the poet—a fine frenzy doubtless, but still a frenzy. Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry; but it is the truth of madness. The reasonings are just; but the premises are false. After the first suppositions have been made, every thing ought to be consistent; but those first suppositions require a degree of credulity which almost amounts to a partial and temporary derangement of the intellect. Hence of all people children are the most imaginative. They abandon themselves without reserve to every illusion. Every image which is strongly presented to their mental eye produces on them the effect of reality. No man, whatever his sensibility may be, is ever affected by Hamlet or Lear, as a little girl is affected by the story of poor Red Riding-hood. She knows that it is all false, that wolves cannot speak, that there are no wolves in England. Yet in spite of her knowledge she believes; she weeps; she trembles; she dares not go into a dark room lest she should feel the teeth of the monster at her throat. Such is the despotism of the imagination over uncultivated minds.

§ 16. In a rude state of society men are children with a greater variety of ideas. It is therefore in such a state of society that we may expect to find the poetical temperament in its highest perfection. In an enlightened age there will be much intelligence, much science, much philosophy, abundance of just classifica-

tion and subtle analysis, abundance of wit and eloquence, abundance of verses, and even of good ones; but little poetry. Men will judge and compare; but they will not create. They will talk about the old poets, and comment on them, and to a certain degree enjoy them. But they will scarcely be able to conceive the effect which poetry produced on their ruder ancestors, the agony, the ecstasy, the plenitude of belief. The Greek Rhapsodists, according to Plato, could scarce recite Homer without falling into convulsions. The Mohawk hardly feels the scalping-knife while he shouts his death-song. The power which the ancient bards of Wales and Germany exercised over their auditors seems to modern readers almost miraculous. Such feelings are very rare in a civilized community, and most rare among those who participate most in its improvements. They linger longest among the peasantry.

§ 17. Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind, as a magic lantern produces an illusion on the eye of the body. And, as the magic lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effects its purpose most completely in a dark age. As the light of knowledge breaks in upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty become more and more definite, and the shades of probability more and more distinct, the hues and lineaments of the phantoms which the poet calls up grow fainter and fainter. We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction.

§ 18. He who, in an enlightened and literary society, aspires to be a great poet, must first become a little child. He must take to pieces the whole web of his mind. He must unlearn much of that knowledge

which has perhaps constituted hitherto his chief title to superiority. His very talents will be a hindrance to him. His difficulties will be proportioned to his proficiency in the pursuits which are fashionable among his contemporaries; and that proficiency will in general be proportioned to the vigour and activity of his mind. And it is well if, after all his sacrifices and exertions, his works do not resemble a lisping man or a modern ruin. We have seen in our own time great talents, intense labour, and long meditation, employed in this struggle against the spirit of the age, and employed, we will not say absolutely in vain, but with dubious success and feeble applause.

§ 19. If these reasonings be just, no poet has ever triumphed over greater difficulties than Milton. He received a learned education: he was a profound and elegant classical scholar: he had studied all the mysteries of Rabbinical literature: he was intimately acquainted with every language of modern Europe, from which either pleasure or information was then to be derived. He was perhaps the only great poet of later times who has been distinguished by the excellence of his Latin verse. The genius of Petrarch was scarcely of the first order; and his poems in the ancient language, though much praised by those who have never read them, are wretched compositions. Cowley, with all his admirable wit and ingenuity, had little imagination: nor indeed do we think his classical diction comparable to that of Milton. The authority of Johnson is against us on this point. But Johnson had studied the bad writers of the middle ages till he had become utterly insensible to the Augustan elegance, and was as ill qualified to judge between two Latin styles as a habitual drunkard to set up for a wine-taster.

§ 20. Versification in a dead language is an exotic, a far-fetched, costly, sickly, imitation of that which elsewhere may be found in healthful and spontaneous perfection. The soils on which this rarity flourishes are in general as ill suited to the production of vigorous native poetry as the flower-pots of a hot-house to the growth of oaks. That the author of the Paradise Lost should have written the Epistle to Manso was truly wonderful. Never before were such marked originality and such exquisite mimicry found together. Indeed in all the Latin poems of Milton the artificial manner indispensable to such works is admirably preserved, while, at the same time, his genius gives to them a peculiar charm, an air of nobleness and freedom, which distinguishes them from all other writings of the same class. They remind us of the amusements of those angelic warriors who composed the cohort of Gabriel:

> "About him exercised heroic games
> The unarmed youth of heaven. But o'er their heads
> Celestial armoury, shield, helm, and spear,
> Hung high, with diamond flaming and with gold."

We cannot look upon the sportive exercises for which the genius of Milton ungirds itself, without catching a glimpse of the gorgeous and terrible panoply which it is accustomed to wear. The strength of his imagination triumphed over every obstacle. So intense and ardent was the fire of his mind, that it not only was not suffocated beneath the weight of fuel, but penetrated the whole superincumbent mass with its own heat and radiance.

§ 21. It is not our intention to attempt anything like a complete examination of the poetry of Milton. The public has long been agreed as to the merit of

the most remarkable passages, the incomparable harmony of the numbers, and the excellence of that style which no rival has been able to equal, and no parodist to degrade, which displays in their highest perfection the idiomatic powers of the English tongue, and to which every ancient and every modern language has contributed something of grace, of energy, or of music. In the vast field of criticism on which we are entering, innumerable reapers have already put their sickles. Yet the harvest is so abundant that the negligent search of a straggling gleaner may be rewarded with a sheaf.

§ 22. The most striking characteristic of the poetry of Milton is the extreme remoteness of the associations by means of which it acts on the reader. Its effect is produced, not so much by what it expresses, as by what it suggests; not so much by the ideas which it directly conveys, as by other ideas which are connected with them. He electrifies the mind through conductors. The most unimaginative man must understand the Iliad. Homer gives him no choice, and requires from him no exertion, but takes the whole upon himself, and sets the images in so clear a light that it is impossible to be blind to them. The works of Milton cannot be comprehended or enjoyed, unless the mind of the reader co-operate with that of the writer. He does not paint a finished picture, or play for a mere passive listener. He sketches, and leaves others to fill up the outline. He strikes the key-note, and expects his hearer to make out the melody.

§ 23. We often hear of the magical influence of poetry. The expression in general means nothing: but, applied to the writings of Milton, it is most appropriate. His poetry acts like an incantation. Its merit lies less in its obvious meaning than in its occult power. There

would seem, at first sight, to be no more in his words than in other words. But they are words of enchantment. No sooner are they pronounced, than the past is present and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial-places of the memory give up their dead. Change the structure of the sentence; substitute one synonym for another, and the whole effect is destroyed. The spell loses its power; and he who should then hope to conjure with it would find himself as much mistaken as Cassim in the Arabian tale, when he stood crying, "Open Wheat", "Open Barley", to the door which obeyed no sound but "Open Sesame". The miserable failure of Dryden in his attempt to translate into his own diction some parts of the Paradise Lost, is a remarkable instance of this.

§ 24. In support of these observations we may remark, that scarcely any passages in the poems of Milton are more generally known or more frequently repeated than those which are little more than muster-rolls of names. They are not always more appropriate or more melodious than other names. But they are charmed names. Every one of them is the first link in a long chain of associated ideas. Like the dwelling-place of our infancy revisited in manhood, like the song of our country heard in a strange land, they produce upon us an effect wholly independent of their intrinsic value. One transports us back to a remote period of history. Another places us among the novel scenes and manners of a distant region. A third evokes all the dear classical recollections of childhood, the school-room, the dog-eared Virgil, the holiday, and the prize. A fourth brings before us the splendid phantoms of chivalrous romance, the trophied lists, the embroidered housings, the quaint devices, the

haunted forests, the enchanted gardens, the achievements of enamoured knights, and the smiles of rescued princesses.

§ 25. In none of the works of Milton is his peculiar manner more happily displayed than in the Allegro and the Penseroso. It is impossible to conceive that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. These poems differ from others, as attar of roses differs from ordinary rose-water, the close-packed essence from the thin diluted mixture. They are indeed not so much poems, as collections of hints, from each of which the reader is to make out a poem for himself. Every epithet is a text for a stanza.

§ 26. The Comus and the Samson Agonistes are works which, though of very different merit, offer some marked points of resemblance. Both are lyric poems in the form of plays. There are perhaps no two kinds of composition so essentially dissimilar as the drama and the ode. The business of the dramatist is to keep himself out of sight, and to let nothing appear but his characters. As soon as he attracts notice to his personal feelings, the illusion is broken. The effect is as unpleasant as that which is produced on the stage by the voice of a prompter or the entrance of a scene-shifter. Hence it was, that the tragedies of Byron were his least successful performances. They resemble those pasteboard pictures invented by the friend of children, Mr. Newbery, in which a single moveable head goes round twenty different bodies, so that the same face looks out upon us successively, from the uniform of a hussar, the furs of a judge, and the rags of a beggar. In all the characters, patriots and tyrants, haters and lovers, the frown and sneer of Harold were discernible in an instant. But this species of egotism,

though fatal to the drama, is the inspiration of the ode. It is the part of the lyric poet to abandon himself, without reserve, to his own emotions.

§ 27. Between these hostile elements many great men have endeavoured to effect an amalgamation, but never with complete success. The Greek drama, on the model of which the Samson was written, sprang from the Ode. The dialogue was ingrafted on the chorus, and naturally partook of its character. The genius of the greatest of the Athenian dramatists co-operated with the circumstances under which tragedy made its first appearance. Æschylus was, head and heart, a lyric poet. In his time, the Greeks had far more intercourse with the East than in the days of Homer; and they had not yet acquired that immense superiority in war, in science, and in the arts, which, in the following generation, led them to treat the Asiatics with contempt. From the narrative of Herodotus it should seem that they still looked up, with the veneration of disciples, to Egypt and Assyria. At this period, accordingly, it was natural that the literature of Greece should be tinctured with the Oriental style. And that style, we think, is discernible in the works of Pindar and Æschylus. The latter often reminds us of the Hebrew writers. The book of Job, indeed, in conduct and diction, bears a considerable resemblance to some of his dramas. Considered as plays, his works are absurd; considered as choruses, they are above all praise. If, for instance, we examine the address of Clytæmnestra to Agamemnon on his return, or the description of the seven Argive chiefs, by the principles of dramatic writing, we shall instantly condemn them as monstrous. But if we forget the characters, and think only of the poetry, we shall admit that it has never been sur-

passed in energy and magnificence. Sophocles made the Greek drama as dramatic as was consistent with its original form. His portraits of men have a sort of similarity; but it is the similarity not of a painting, but of a bas-relief. It suggests a resemblance; but it does not produce an illusion. Euripides attempted to carry the reform further. But it was a task far beyond his powers, perhaps beyond any powers. Instead of correcting what was bad, he destroyed what was excellent. He substituted crutches for stilts, bad sermons for good odes.

§ 28. Milton, it is well known, admired Euripides highly, much more highly than, in our opinion, Euripides deserved. Indeed the caresses which this partiality leads our countryman to bestow on "sad Electra's poet", sometimes remind us of the beautiful Queen of Fairy-land kissing the long ears of Bottom. At all events, there can be no doubt that this veneration for the Athenian, whether just or not, was injurious to the Samson Agonistes. Had Milton taken Æschylus for his model, he would have given himself up to the lyric inspiration, and poured out profusely all the treasures of his mind, without bestowing a thought on those dramatic proprieties which the nature of the work rendered it impossible to preserve. In the attempt to reconcile things in their own nature inconsistent he has failed, as every one else must have failed. We cannot identify ourselves with the characters, as in a good play. We cannot identify ourselves with the poet, as in a good ode. The conflicting ingredients, like an acid and an alkali mixed, neutralise each other. We are by no means insensible to the merits of this celebrated piece, to the severe dignity of the style, the graceful and pathetic solemnity of the opening speech, or the wild and barbaric

melody which gives so striking an effect to the choral passages. But we think it, we confess, the least successful effort of the genius of Milton.

§ 29. The Comus is framed on the model of the Italian Masque, as the Samson is framed on the model of the Greek Tragedy. It is certainly the noblest performance of the kind which exists in any language. It is as far superior to the Faithful Shepherdess, as the Faithful Shepherdess is to the Aminta, or the Aminta to the Pastor Fido. It was well for Milton that he had here no Euripides to mislead him. He understood and loved the literature of modern Italy. But he did not feel for it the same veneration which he entertained for the remains of Athenian and Roman poetry, consecrated by so many lofty and endearing recollections. The faults, moreover, of his Italian predecessors were of a kind to which his mind had a deadly antipathy. He could stoop to a plain style, sometimes even to a bald style; but false brilliancy was his utter aversion. His Muse had no objection to a russet attire; but she turned with disgust from the finery of Guarini, as tawdry and as paltry as the rags of a chimney-sweeper on May-day. Whatever ornaments she wears are of massive gold, not only dazzling to the sight, but capable of standing the severest test of the crucible.

§ 30. Milton attended in the Comus to the distinction which he afterwards neglected in the Samson. He made his Masque what it ought to be, essentially lyrical, and dramatic only in semblance. He has not attempted a fruitless struggle against a defect inherent in the nature of that species of composition; and he has therefore succeeded, wherever success was not impossible. The speeches must be read as majestic soliloquies; and he who so reads them will be

enraptured with their eloquence, their sublimity, and their music. The interruptions of the dialogue, however, impose a constraint upon the writer, and break the illusion of the reader. The finest passages are those which are lyric in form as well as in spirit. "I should much commend", says the excellent Sir Henry Wotton in a letter to Milton, "the tragical part if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dorique delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto, I must plainly confess to you, I have seen yet nothing parallel in our language." The criticism was just. It is when Milton escapes from the shackles of the dialogue, when he is discharged from the labour of uniting two incongruous styles, when he is at liberty to indulge his choral raptures without reserve, that he rises even above himself. Then, like his own good Genius bursting from the earthly form and weeds of Thyrsis, he stands forth in celestial freedom and beauty; he seems to cry exultingly,

> "Now my task is smoothly done,
> I can fly, or I can run",

to skim the earth, to soar above the clouds, to bathe in the Elysian dew of the rainbow, and to inhale the balmy smells of nard and cassia, which the musky wings of the zephyr scatter through the cedared alleys of the Hesperides.

§ 31. There are several of the minor poems of Milton on which we would willingly make a few remarks. Still more willingly would we enter into a detailed examination of that admirable poem, the Paradise Regained, which, strangely enough, is scarcely ever mentioned except as an instance of the blindness of the parental affection which men of letters bear towards the offspring of their intellects. That Milton

was mistaken in preferring this work, excellent as it is, to the Paradise Lost, we readily admit. But we are sure that the superiority of the Paradise Lost to the Paradise Regained is not more decided, than the superiority of the Paradise Regained to every poem which has since made its appearance. Our limits, however, prevent us from discussing the point at length. We hasten on to that extraordinary production which the general suffrage of critics has placed in the highest class of human compositions.

§ 32. The only poem of modern times which can be compared with the Paradise Lost is the Divine Comedy. The subject of Milton, in some points, resembled that of Dante; but he has treated it in a widely different manner. We cannot, we think, better illustrate our opinion respecting our own great poet, than by contrasting him with the father of Tuscan literature.

§ 33. The poetry of Milton differs from that of Dante, as the hieroglyphics of Egypt differed from the picture-writing of Mexico. The images which Dante employs speak for themselves; they stand simply for what they are. Those of Milton have a signification which is often discernible only to the initiated. Their value depends less on what they directly represent than on what they remotely suggest. However strange, however grotesque, may be the appearance which Dante undertakes to describe, he never shrinks from describing it. He gives us the shape, the colour, the sound, the smell, the taste; he counts the numbers; he measures the size. His similes are the illustrations of a traveller. Unlike those of other poets, and especially of Milton, they are introduced in a plain, business-like manner; not for the sake of any beauty in the objects from which they are drawn; not for the sake

of any ornament which they may impart to the poem; but simply in order to make the meaning of the writer as clear to the reader as it is to himself. The ruins of the precipice which led from the sixth to the seventh circle of hell were like those of the rock which fell into the Adige on the south of Trent. The cataract of Phlegethon was like that of Aqua Cheta at the monastery of St. Benedict. The place where the heretics were confined in burning tombs resembled the vast cemetery of Arles.

§ 34. Let us compare with the exact details of Dante the dim intimations of Milton. We will cite a few examples. The English poet has never thought of taking the measure of Satan. He gives us merely a vague idea of vast bulk. In one passage the fiend lies stretched out huge in length, floating many a rood, equal in size to the earth-born enemies of Jove, or to the sea-monster which the mariner mistakes for an island. When he addresses himself to battle against the guardian angels, he stands like Teneriffe or Atlas: his stature reaches the sky. Contrast with these descriptions the lines in which Dante has described the gigantic spectre of Nimrod. "His face seemed to me as long and as broad as the ball of St. Peter's at Rome; and his other limbs were in proportion; so that the bank, which concealed him from the waist downwards, nevertheless showed so much of him, that three tall Germans would in vain have attempted to reach to his hair." We are sensible that we do no justice to the admirable style of the Florentine poet. But Mr. Cary's translation is not at hand; and our version, however rude, is sufficient to illustrate our meaning.

§ 35. Once more, compare the lazar-house in the eleventh book of the Paradise Lost with the last ward

of Malebolge in Dante. Milton avoids the loathsome details, and takes refuge in indistinct but solemn and tremendous imagery, Despair hurrying from couch to couch to mock the wretches with his attendance, Death shaking his dart over them, but, in spite of supplications, delaying to strike. What says Dante? "There was such a moan there as there would be if all the sick who, between July and September, are in the hospitals of Valdichiana, and of the Tuscan swamps, and of Sardinia, were in one pit together; and such a stench was issuing forth as is wont to issue from decayed limbs."

§ 36. We will not take upon ourselves the invidious office of settling precedency between two such writers. Each in his own department is incomparable; and each, we may remark, has wisely, or fortunately, taken a subject adapted to exhibit his peculiar talent to the greatest advantage. The Divine Comedy is a personal narrative. Dante is the eye-witness and ear-witness of that which he relates. He is the very man who has heard the tormented spirits crying out for the second death, who has read the dusky characters on the portal within which there is no hope, who has hidden his face from the terrors of the Gorgon, who has fled from the hooks and the seething pitch of Barbariccia and Draghignazzo. His own hands have grasped the shaggy sides of Lucifer. His own feet have climbed the mountain of expiation. His own brow has been marked by the purifying angel. The reader would throw aside such a tale in incredulous disgust, unless it were told with the strongest air of veracity, with a sobriety even in its horrors, with the greatest precision and multiplicity in its details. The narrative of Milton in this respect differs from that of Dante, as the adventures of Amadis differ from those of Gulliver. The

author of Amadis would have made his book ridiculous if he had introduced those minute particulars which give such a charm to the work of Swift, the nautical observations, the affected delicacy about names, the official documents transcribed at full length, and all the unmeaning gossip and scandal of the court, springing out of nothing, and tending to nothing. We are not shocked at being told that a man who lived, nobody knows when, saw many very strange sights, and we can easily abandon ourselves to the illusion of the romance. But when Lemuel Gulliver, surgeon, resident at Rotherhithe, tells us of pygmies and giants, flying islands and philosophising horses, nothing but such circumstantial touches could produce for a single moment a deception on the imagination.

§ 37. Of all the poets who have introduced into their works the agency of supernatural beings, Milton has succeeded best. Here Dante decidedly yields to him: and as this is a point on which many rash and ill-considered judgments have been pronounced, we feel inclined to dwell on it a little longer. The most fatal error which a poet can possibly commit in the management of his machinery, is that of attempting to philosophise too much. Milton has been often censured for ascribing to spirits many functions of which spirits must be incapable. But these objections, though sanctioned by eminent names, originate, we venture to say, in profound ignorance of the art of poetry.

§ 38. What is spirit? What are our own minds, the portion of spirit with which we are best acquainted? We observe certain phenomena. We cannot explain them into material causes. We therefore infer that there exists something which is not material. But of this something we have no idea. We can define it

only by negatives. We can reason about it only by symbols. We use the word; but we have no image of the thing; and the business of poetry is with images, and not with words. The poet uses words indeed; but they are merely the instruments of his art, not its objects. They are the materials which he is to dispose in such a manner as to present a picture to the mental eye. And if they are not so disposed, they are no more entitled to be called poetry than a bale of canvas and a box of colours to be called a painting.

§ 39. Logicians may reason about abstractions. But the great mass of men must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude in all ages and nations to idolatry can be explained on no other principle. The first inhabitants of Greece, there is reason to believe, worshipped one invisible Deity. But the necessity of having something more definite to adore produced, in a few centuries, the innumerable crowd of Gods and Goddesses. In like manner the ancient Persians thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form. Yet even these transferred to the Sun the worship which, in speculation, they considered due only to the Supreme Mind. The history of the Jews is the record of a continued struggle between pure Theism, supported by the most terrible sanctions, and the strangely fascinating desire of having some visible and tangible object of adoration. Perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon has assigned for the rapidity with which Christianity spread over the world, while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, operated more powerfully than this feeling. God, the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshippers. A philosopher might admire so noble a conception: but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which presented no

image to their minds. It was before Deity embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the Synagogue, and the doubts of the Academy, and the pride of the Portico, and the fasces of the Lictor, and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust. Soon after Christianity had achieved its triumph, the principle which had assisted it began to corrupt it. It became a new Paganism. Patron saints assumed the offices of household gods. St. George took the place of Mars. St. Elmo consoled the mariner for the loss of Castor and Pollux. The Virgin Mother and Cecilia succeeded to Venus and the Muses. The fascination of sex and loveliness was again joined to that of celestial dignity; and the homage of chivalry was blended with that of religion. Reformers have often made a stand against these feelings; but never with more than apparent and partial success. The men who demolished the images in Cathedrals have not always been able to demolish those which were enshrined in their minds. It would not be difficult to show that in politics the same rule holds good. Doctrines, we are afraid, must generally be embodied before they can excite a strong public feeling. The multitude is more easily interested for the most unmeaning badge, or the most insignificant name, than for the most important principle.

§ 40. From these considerations, we infer that no poet, who should affect that metaphysical accuracy for the want of which Milton has been blamed, would escape a disgraceful failure. Still, however, there was another extreme which, though far less dangerous, was also to be avoided. The imaginations of men are in

a great measure under the control of their opinions. The most exquisite art of poetical colouring can produce no illusion, when it is employed to represent that which is at once perceived to be incongruous and absurd. Milton wrote in an age of philosophers and theologians. It was necessary, therefore, for him to abstain from giving such a shock to their understandings as might break the charm which it was his object to throw over their imaginations. This is the real explanation of the indistinctness and inconsistency with which he has often been reproached. Dr. Johnson acknowledges that it was absolutely necessary that the spirits should be clothed with material forms. "But", says he, "the poet should have secured the consistency of his system by keeping immateriality out of sight, and seducing the reader to drop it from his thoughts." This is easily said; but what if Milton could not seduce his readers to drop immateriality from their thoughts? What if the contrary opinion had taken so full a possession of the minds of men as to leave no room even for the half belief which poetry requires? Such we suspect to have been the case. It was impossible for the poet to adopt altogether the material or the immaterial system. He therefore took his stand on the debatable ground. He left the whole in ambiguity. He has doubtless, by so doing, laid himself open to the charge of inconsistency. But though philosophically in the wrong, we cannot but believe that he was poetically in the right. This task, which almost any other writer would have found impracticable, was easy to him. The peculiar art which he possessed of communicating his meaning circuitously through a long succession of associated ideas, and of intimating more than he expressed, enabled him to disguise those incongruities which he could not avoid.

§ 41. Poetry which relates to the beings of another world ought to be at once mysterious and picturesque. That of Milton is so. That of Dante is picturesque indeed beyond any that ever was written. Its effect approaches to that produced by the pencil or the chisel. But it is picturesque to the exclusion of all mystery. This is a fault on the right side, a fault inseparable from the plan of Dante's poem, which, as we have already observed, rendered the utmost accuracy of description necessary. Still it is a fault. The supernatural agents excite an interest; but it is not the interest which is proper to supernatural agents. We feel that we could talk to the ghosts and demons, without any emotion of unearthly awe. We could, like Don Juan, ask them to supper, and eat heartily in their company. Dante's angels are good men with wings. His devils are spiteful ugly executioners. His dead men are merely living men in strange situations. The scene which passes between the poet and Farinata is justly celebrated. Still, Farinata in the burning tomb is exactly what Farinata would have been at an *auto da fe*. Nothing can be more touching than the first interview of Dante and Beatrice. Yet what is it, but a lovely woman chiding, with sweet austere composure, the lover for whose affection she is grateful, but whose vices she reprobates? The feelings which give the passage its charm would suit the streets of Florence as well as the summit of the Mount of Purgatory.

§ 42. The spirits of Milton are unlike those of almost all other writers. His fiends, in particular, are wonderful creations. They are not metaphysical abstractions. They are not wicked men. They are not ugly beasts. They have no horns, no tails, none of the fee-faw-fum of Tasso and Klopstock. They have

just enough in common with human nature to be intelligible to human beings. Their characters are, like their forms, marked by a certain dim resemblance to those of men, but exaggerated to gigantic dimensions, and veiled in mysterious gloom.

§ 43. Perhaps the gods and demons of Æschylus may best bear a comparison with the angels and devils of Milton. The style of the Athenian had, as we have remarked, something of the Oriental character; and the same peculiarity may be traced in his mythology. It has nothing of the amenity and elegance which we generally find in the superstitions of Greece. All is rugged, barbaric, and colossal. The legends of Æschylus seem to harmonise less with the fragrant groves and graceful porticoes in which his countrymen paid their vows to the God of Light and Goddess of Desire, than with those huge and grotesque labyrinths of eternal granite in which Egypt enshrined her mystic Osiris, or in which Hindostan still bows down to her seven-headed idols. His favourite gods are those of the elder generation, the sons of heaven and earth, compared with whom Jupiter himself was a stripling and an upstart, the gigantic Titans, and the inexorable Furies. Foremost among his creations of this class stands Prometheus, half fiend, half redeemer, the friend of man, the sullen and implacable enemy of heaven. Prometheus bears undoubtedly a considerable resemblance to the Satan of Milton. In both we find the same impatience of control, the same ferocity, the same unconquerable pride. In both characters also are mingled, though in very different proportions, some kind and generous feelings. Prometheus, however, is hardly superhuman enough. He talks too much of his chains and his uneasy posture: he is rather too much depressed and agitated. His resolution seems

to depend on the knowledge which he possesses that he holds the fate of his torturer in his hands, and that the hour of his release will surely come. But Satan is a creature of another sphere. The might of his intellectual nature is victorious over the extremity of pain. Amidst agonies which cannot be conceived without horror, he deliberates, resolves, and even exults. Against the sword of Michael, against the thunder of Jehovah, against the flaming lake, and the marl burning with solid fire, against the prospect of an eternity of unintermitted misery, his spirit bears up unbroken, resting on its own innate energies, requiring no support from anything external, nor even from hope itself.

§ 44. To return for a moment to the parallel which we have been attempting to draw between Milton and Dante, we would add that the poetry of these great men has in a considerable degree taken its character from their moral qualities. They are not egotists. They rarely obtrude their idiosyncrasies on their readers. They have nothing in common with those modern beggars for fame, who extort a pittance from the compassion of the inexperienced by exposing the nakedness and sores of their minds. Yet it would be difficult to name two writers whose works have been more completely, though undesignedly, coloured by their personal feelings.

§ 45. The character of Milton was peculiarly distinguished by loftiness of spirit; that of Dante by intensity of feeling. In every line of the Divine Comedy we discern the asperity which is produced by pride struggling with misery. There is perhaps no work in the world so deeply and uniformly sorrowful. The melancholy of Dante was no fantastic caprice. It was not, as far as at this distance of time can be judged, the effect of external circumstances. It was

from within. Neither love nor glory, neither the conflicts of earth nor the hope of heaven could dispel it. It turned every consolation and every pleasure into its own nature. It resembled that noxious Sardinian soil of which the intense bitterness is said to have been perceptible even in its honey. His mind was, in the noble language of the Hebrew poet, "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and where the light was as darkness". The gloom of his character discolours all the passions of men, and all the face of nature, and tinges with its own livid hue the flowers of Paradise and the glories of the eternal throne. All the portraits of him are singularly characteristic. No person can look on the features, noble even to ruggedness, the dark furrows of the cheek, the haggard and woful stare of the eye, the sullen and contemptuous curve of the lip, and doubt that they belong to a man too proud and too sensitive to be happy.

§ 46. Milton was, like Dante, a statesman and a lover; and, like Dante, he had been unfortunate in ambition and in love. He had survived his health and his sight, the comforts of his home, and the prosperity of his party. Of the great men by whom he had been distinguished at his entrance into life, some had been taken away from the evil to come; some had carried into foreign climates their unconquerable hatred of oppression; some were pining in dungeons; and some had poured forth their blood on scaffolds. Venal and licentious scribblers, with just sufficient talent to clothe the thoughts of a pandar in the style of a bellman, were now the favourite writers of the Sovereign and of the public. It was a loathsome herd, which could be compared to nothing so fitly as to the rabble of Comus, grotesque monsters, half bestial, half human, dropping with wine, bloated

with gluttony, and reeling in obscene dances. Amidst these that fair Muse was placed, like the chaste lady of the Masque, lofty, spotless, and serene, to be chattered at, and pointed at, and grinned at, by the whole rout of Satyrs and Goblins. If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, they might have been excused in Milton. But the strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience. His spirits do not seem to have been high, but they were singularly equable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful. Such as it was when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels, in the prime of health and manly beauty, loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes, such it continued to be when, after having experienced every calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless, and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die.

§ 47. Hence it was that, though he wrote the Paradise Lost at a time of life when images of beauty and tenderness are in general beginning to fade, even from those minds in which they have not been effaced by anxiety and disappointment, he adorned it with all that is most lovely and delightful in the physical and in the moral world. Neither Theocritus nor Ariosto had a finer or a more healthful sense of the pleasantness of external objects, or loved better to luxuriate amidst sunbeams and flowers, the songs of nightingales, the juice of summer fruits, and the coolness of shady fountains. His conception of love unites all the voluptuousness of the Oriental hāram, and all the

gallantry of the chivalric tournament, with all the pure and quiet affection of an English fireside. His poetry reminds us of the miracles of Alpine scenery. Nooks and dells, beautiful as fairy land, are embosomed in its most rugged and gigantic elevations. The roses and myrtles bloom unchilled on the verge of the avalanche.

§ 48. Traces, indeed, of the peculiar character of Milton may be found in all his works; but it is most strongly displayed in the Sonnets. Those remarkable poems have been undervalued by critics who have not understood their nature. They have no epigrammatic point. There is none of the ingenuity of Filicaja in the thought, none of the hard and brilliant enamel of Petrarch in the style. They are simple but majestic records of the feelings of the poet; as little tricked out for the public eye as his diary would have been. A victory, an unexpected attack upon the city, a momentary fit of depression or exultation, a jest thrown out against one of his books, a dream which for a short time restored to him that beautiful face over which the grave had closed for ever, led him to musings which, without effort, shaped themselves into verse. The unity of sentiment and severity of style which characterise these little pieces remind us of the Greek Anthology, or perhaps still more of the Collects of the English Liturgy. The noble poem on the Massacres of Piedmont is strictly a collect in verse.

§ 49. The Sonnets are more or less striking, according as the occasions which gave birth to them are more or less interesting. But they are, almost without exception, dignified by a sobriety and greatness of mind to which we know not where to look for a parallel. It would, indeed, be scarcely safe to draw any decided inferences as to the character of a writer from

passages directly egotistical. But the qualities which we have ascribed to Milton, though perhaps most strongly marked in those parts of his works which treat of his personal feelings, are distinguishable in every page, and impart to all his writings, prose and poetry, English, Latin, and Italian, a strong family likeness.

§ 50. His public conduct was such as was to be expected from a man of a spirit so high and of an intellect so powerful. He lived at one of the most memorable eras in the history of mankind, at the very crisis of the great conflict between Oromasdes and Arimanes, liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice. That great battle was fought for no single generation, for no single land. The destinies of the human race were staked on the same cast with the freedom of the English people. Then were first proclaimed those mighty principles which have since worked their way into the depths of the American forests, which have roused Greece from the slavery and degradation of two thousand years, and which, from one end of Europe to the other, have kindled an unquenchable fire in the hearts of the oppressed, and loosed the knees of the oppressors with an unwonted fear.

§ 51. Of those principles, then struggling for their infant existence, Milton was the most devoted and eloquent literary champion. We need not say how much we admire his public conduct. But we cannot disguise from ourselves that a large portion of his countrymen still think it unjustifiable. The civil war, indeed, has been more discussed, and is less understood, than any event in English history. The friends of liberty laboured under the disadvantage of which the lion in the fable complained so bitterly. Though they were the conquerors, their enemies were the painters. As a body, the Roundheads had done their

utmost to decry and ruin literature; and literature was even with them, as, in the long run, it always is with its enemies. The best book on their side of the question is the charming narrative of Mrs. Hutchinson. May's History of the Parliament is good; but it breaks off at the most interesting crisis of the struggle. The performance of Ludlow is foolish and violent; and most of the later writers who have espoused the same cause, Oldmixon for instance, and Catherine Macaulay, have, to say the least, been more distinguished by zeal than either by candour or by skill. On the other side are the most authoritative and the most popular historical works in our language, that of Clarendon, and that of Hume. The former is not only ably written and full of valuable information, but has also an air of dignity and sincerity which makes even the prejudices and errors with which it abounds respectable. Hume, from whose fascinating narrative the great mass of the reading public are still contented to take their opinions, hated religion so much that he hated liberty for having been allied with religion, and has pleaded the cause of tyranny with the dexterity of an advocate, while affecting the impartiality of a judge.

§ 52. The public conduct of Milton must be approved or condemned according as the resistance of the people to Charles the First shall appear to be justifiable or criminal. We shall therefore make no apology for dedicating a few pages to the discussion of that interesting and most important question. We shall not argue it on general grounds. We shall not recur to those primary principles from which the claim of any government to the obedience of its subjects is to be deduced. We are entitled to that vantage ground; but we will relinquish it. We are, on this point, so confident of superiority, that we are not unwilling to

imitate the ostentatious generosity of those ancient knights, who vowed to joust without helmet or shield against all enemies, and to give their antagonists the advantage of sun and wind. We will take the naked constitutional question. We confidently affirm, that every reason which can be urged in favour of the Revolution of 1688 may be urged with at least equal force in favour of what is called the Great Rebellion.

§ 53. In one respect, only, we think, can the warmest admirers of Charles venture to say that he was a better sovereign than his son. He was not, in name and profession, a Papist; we say in name and profession, because both Charles himself and his creature Laud, while they abjured the innocent badges of Popery, retained all its worst vices, a complete subjection of reason to authority, a weak preference of form to substance, a childish passion for mummeries, an idolatrous veneration for the priestly character, and, above all, a merciless intolerance. This, however, we waive. We will concede that Charles was a good Protestant; but we say that his Protestantism does not make the slightest distinction between his case and that of James.

§ 54. The principles of the Revolution have often been grossly misrepresented, and never more than in the course of the present year. There is a certain class of men, who, while they profess to hold in reverence the great names and great actions of former times, never look at them for any other purpose than in order to find in them some excuse for existing abuses. In every venerable precedent they pass by what is essential, and take only what is accidental: they keep out of sight what is beneficial, and hold up to public imitation all that is defective. If, in any part of any great example, there be anything unsound, these flesh-flies detect it with an unerring instinct, and dart upon it

with a ravenous delight. If some good end has been attained in spite of them, they feel, with their prototype, that

> "Their labour must be to pervert that end,
> And out of good still to find means of evil".

§ 55. To the blessings which England has derived from the Revolution these people are utterly insensible. The expulsion of a tyrant, the solemn recognition of popular rights, liberty, security, toleration, all go for nothing with them. One sect there was, which, from unfortunate temporary causes, it was thought necessary to keep under close restraint. One part of the empire there was so unhappily circumstanced, that at that time its misery was necessary to our happiness, and its slavery to our freedom. These are the parts of the Revolution which the politicians of whom we speak, love to contemplate, and which seem to them not indeed to vindicate, but in some degree to palliate, the good which it has produced. Talk to them of Naples, of Spain, or of South America. They stand forth zealots for the doctrine of Divine Right, which has now come back to us, like a thief from transportation, under the *alias* of Legitimacy. But mention the miseries of Ireland. Then William is a hero. Then Somers and Shrewsbury are great men. Then the Revolution is a glorious era. The very same persons who, in this country, never omit an opportunity of reviving every wretched Jacobite slander respecting the Whigs of that period, have no sooner crossed St. George's Channel, than they begin to fill their bumpers to the glorious and immortal memory. They may truly boast that they look not at men, but at measures. So that evil be done, they care not who does it; the arbitrary Charles, or the liberal William, Ferdinand the

Catholic, or Frederic the Protestant. On such occasions their deadliest opponents may reckon upon their candid construction. The bold assertions of these people have of late impressed a large portion of the public with an opinion that James the Second was expelled simply because he was a Catholic, and that the Revolution was essentially a Protestant Revolution.

§ 56. But this certainly was not the case; nor can any person who has acquired more knowledge of the history of those times than is to be found in Goldsmith's Abridgment believe that, if James had held his own religious opinions without wishing to make proselytes, or if, wishing even to make proselytes, he had contented himself with exerting only his constitutional influence for that purpose, the Prince of Orange would ever have been invited over. Our ancestors, we suppose, knew their own meaning; and, if we may believe them, their hostility was primarily not to popery, but to tyranny. They did not drive out a tyrant because he was a Catholic; but they excluded Catholics from the crown, because they thought them likely to be tyrants. The ground on which they, in their famous resolution, declared the throne vacant, was this, "that James had broken the fundamental laws of the kingdom". Every man, therefore, who approves of the Revolution of 1688 must hold that the breach of fundamental laws on the part of the sovereign justifies resistance. The question, then, is this: Had Charles the First broken the fundamental laws of England?

§ 57. No person can answer in the negative, unless he refuses credit, not merely to all the accusations brought against Charles by his opponents, but to the narratives of the warmest Royalists, and to the confessions of the King himself. If there be any truth in

any historian of any party who has related the events of that reign, the conduct of Charles, from his accession to the meeting of the Long Parliament, had been a continued course of oppression and treachery. Let those who applaud the Revolution, and condemn the Rebellion, mention one act of James the Second to which a parallel is not to be found in the history of his father. Let them lay their fingers on a single article in the Declaration of Right, presented by the two Houses to William and Mary, which Charles is not acknowledged to have violated. He had, according to the testimony of his own friends, usurped the functions of the legislature, raised taxes without the consent of parliament, and quartered troops on the people in the most illegal and vexatious manner. Not a single session of parliament had passed without some unconstitutional attack on the freedom of debate; the right of petition was grossly violated; arbitrary judgments, exorbitant fines, and unwarranted imprisonments, were grievances of daily occurrence. If these things do not justify resistance, the Revolution was treason; if they do, the Great Rebellion was laudable.

§ 58. But, it is said, why not adopt milder measures? Why, after the king had consented to so many reforms, and renounced so many oppressive prerogatives, did the parliament continue to rise in their demands at the risk of provoking a civil war? The ship-money had been given up. The Star Chamber had been abolished. Provision had been made for the frequent convocation and secure deliberation of parliaments. Why not pursue an end confessedly good by peaceable and regular means? We recur again to the analogy of the Revolution. Why was James driven from the throne? Why was he not retained upon conditions? He too had offered to call a free parliament and to

submit to its decision all the matters in dispute. Yet we are in the habit of praising our forefathers, who preferred a revolution, a disputed succession, a dynasty of strangers, twenty years of foreign and intestine war, a standing army, and a national debt, to the rule, however restricted, of a tried and proved tyrant. The Long Parliament acted on the same principle, and is entitled to the same praise. They could not trust the King. He had no doubt passed salutary laws; but what assurance was there that he would not break them? He had renounced oppressive prerogatives; but where was the security that he would not resume them? The nation had to deal with a man whom no tie could bind, a man who made and broke promises with equal facility, a man whose honour had been a hundred times pawned, and never redeemed.

§ 59. Here, indeed, the Long Parliament stands on still stronger ground than the Convention of 1688. No action of James can be compared to the conduct of Charles with respect to the Petition of Right. The Lords and Commons present him with a bill in which the constitutional limits of his power are marked out. He hesitates; he evades; at last he bargains to give his assent for five subsidies. The bill receives his solemn assent; the subsidies are voted; but no sooner is the tyrant relieved, than he returns at once to all the arbitrary measures which he had bound himself to abandon, and violates all the clauses of the very Act which he had been paid to pass.

§ 60. For more than ten years the people had seen the rights which were theirs by a double claim, by immemorial inheritance and by recent purchase, infringed by the perfidious king who had recognised them. At length circumstances compelled Charles to summon another parliament: another chance was

given to our fathers. Were they to throw it away as they had thrown away the former? Were they again to be cozened by *le Roi le veut*? Were they again to advance their money on pledges which had been forfeited over and over again? Were they to lay a second Petition of Right at the foot of the throne, to grant another lavish aid in exchange for another unmeaning ceremony, and then to take their departure, till, after ten years more of fraud and oppression, their prince should again require a supply, and again repay it with a perjury? They were compelled to choose whether they would trust a tyrant or conquer him. We think that they chose wisely and nobly.

§ 61. The advocates of Charles, like the advocates of other malefactors against whom overwhelming evidence is produced, generally decline all controversy about the facts, and content themselves with calling testimony to character. He had so many private virtues! And had James the Second no private virtues? Was Oliver Cromwell, his bitterest enemies themselves being judges, destitute of private virtues? And what, after all, are the virtues ascribed to Charles? A religious zeal, not more sincere than that of his son, and fully as weak and narrow-minded, and a few of the ordinary household decencies which half the tombstones in England claim for those who lie beneath them. A good father! A good husband! Ample apologies indeed for fifteen years of persecution, tyranny, and falsehood!

§ 62. We charge him with having broken his coronation oath; and we are told that he kept his marriage vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates; and the defence is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him! We

censure him for having violated the articles of the Petition of Right, after having, for good and valuable consideration, promised to observe them; and we are informed that he was accustomed to hear prayers at six o'clock in the morning! It is to such considerations as these, together with his Vandyke dress, his handsome face, and his peaked beard, that he owes, we verily believe, most of his popularity with the present generation.

§ 63. For ourselves, we own that we do not understand the common phrase, a good man, but a bad king. We can as easily conceive a good man and an unnatural father, or a good man and a treacherous friend. We cannot, in estimating the character of an individual, leave out of our consideration his conduct in the most important of all human relations; and if in that relation we find him to have been selfish, cruel, and deceitful, we shall take the liberty to call him a bad man, in spite of all his temperance at table, and all his regularity at chapel.

§ 64. We cannot refrain from adding a few words respecting a topic on which the defenders of Charles are fond of dwelling. If, they say, he governed his people ill, he at least governed them after the example of his predecessors. If he violated their privileges, it was because those privileges had not been accurately defined. No act of oppression has ever been imputed to him which has not a parallel in the annals of the Tudors. This point Hume has laboured, with an art which is as discreditable in a historical work as it would be admirable in a forensic address. The answer is short, clear, and decisive. Charles had assented to the Petition of Right. He had renounced the oppressive powers said to have been exercised by his predecessors, and he had renounced them for

money. He was not entitled to set up his antiquated claims against his own recent release.

§ 65. These arguments are so obvious, that it may seem superfluous to dwell upon them. But those who have observed how much the events of that time are misrepresented and misunderstood, will not blame us for stating the case simply. It is a case of which the simplest statement is the strongest.

§ 66. The enemies of the Parliament, indeed, rarely choose to take issue on the great points of the question. They content themselves with exposing some of the crimes and follies to which public commotions necessarily give birth. They bewail the unmerited fate of Strafford. They execrate the lawless violence of the army. They laugh at the Scriptural names of the preachers. Major-generals fleecing their districts; soldiers revelling on the spoils of a ruined peasantry; upstarts, enriched by the public plunder, taking possession of the hospitable firesides and hereditary trees of the old gentry; boys smashing the beautiful windows of cathedrals; Quakers riding naked through the market-place; Fifth-monarchy-men shouting for King Jesus; agitators lecturing from the tops of tubs on the fate of Agag;—all these, they tell us, were the offspring of the Great Rebellion.

§ 67. Be it so. We are not careful to answer in this matter. These charges, were they infinitely more important, would not alter our opinion of an event which alone has made us to differ from the slaves who crouch beneath despotic sceptres. Many evils, no doubt, were produced by the civil war. They were the price of our liberty. Has the acquisition been worth the sacrifice? It is the nature of the Devil of tyranny to tear and rend the body which he leaves. Are the miseries of continued posses-

sion less horrible than the struggles of the tremendous exorcism?

§ 68. If it were possible that a people brought up under an intolerant and arbitrary system could subvert that system without acts of cruelty and folly, half the objections to despotic power would be removed. We should, in that case, be compelled to acknowledge that it at least produces no pernicious effects on the intellectual and moral character of a nation. We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions. But the more violent the outrages, the more assured we feel that a revolution was necessary. The violence of those outrages will always be proportioned to the ferocity and ignorance of the people; and the ferocity and ignorance of the people will be proportioned to the oppression and degradation under which they have been accustomed to live. Thus it was in our civil war. The heads of the church and state reaped only that which they had sown. The government had prohibited free discussion: it had done its best to keep the people unacquainted with their duties and their rights. The retribution was just and natural. If our rulers suffered from popular ignorance, it was because they had themselves taken away the key of knowledge. If they were assailed with blind fury, it was because they had exacted an equally blind submission.

§ 69. It is the character of such revolutions that we always see the worst of them at first. Till men have been some time free, they know not how to use their freedom. The natives of wine countries are generally sober. In climates where wine is a rarity intemperance abounds. A newly-liberated people may be compared to a northern army encamped on the Rhine or the Xeres. It is said that, when soldiers in such a situation first find themselves able to indulge without re-

straint in such a rare and expensive luxury, nothing is to be seen but intoxication. Soon, however, plenty teaches discretion; and, after wine has been for a few months their daily fare, they become more temperate than they had ever been in their own country. In the same manner, the final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation, and mercy. Its immediate effects are often atrocious crimes, conflicting errors, scepticism on points the most clear, dogmatism on points the most mysterious. It is just at this crisis that its enemies love to exhibit it. They pull down the scaffolding from the half-finished edifice: they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance; and then ask in scorn where the promised splendour and comfort is to be found. If such miserable sophisms were to prevail, there would never be a good house or a good government in the world.

§ 70. Ariosto tells a pretty story of a fairy, who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul and poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were for ever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war. Such a spirit is Liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her! And happy are those who, having dared to receive her in her degraded and frightful shape,

shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and her glory!

§ 71. There is only one cure for the evils which newly-acquired freedom produces; and that cure is freedom. When a prisoner first leaves his cell, he cannot bear the light of day: he is unable to discriminate colours, or recognise faces. But the remedy is, not to remand him into his dungeon, but to accustom him to the rays of the sun. The blaze of truth and liberty may at first dazzle and bewilder nations which have become half-blind in the house of bondage. But let them gaze on, and they will soon be able to bear it. In a few years men learn to reason. The extreme violence of opinions subsides. Hostile theories correct each other. The scattered elements of truth cease to contend, and begin to coalesce. And at length a system of justice and order is educed out of the chaos.

§ 72. Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water till he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait for ever.

§ 73. Therefore it is that we decidedly approve of the conduct of Milton and the other wise and good men who, in spite of much that was ridiculous and hateful in the conduct of their associates, stood firmly by the cause of Public Liberty. We are not aware that the poet has been charged with personal participation in any of the blameable excesses of that time. The favourite topic of his enemies is the line of conduct which he pursued with regard to the execution of

the King. Of that celebrated proceeding we by no means approve. Still we must say, in justice to the many eminent persons who concurred in it, and in justice more particularly to the eminent person who defended it, that nothing can be more absurd than the imputations which, for the last hundred and sixty years, it has been the fashion to cast upon the Regicides. We have, throughout, abstained from appealing to first principles. We will not appeal to them now. We recur again to the parallel case of the Revolution. What essential distinction can be drawn between the execution of the father and the deposition of the son? What constitutional maxim is there which applies to the former and not to the latter? The King can do no wrong. If so, James was as innocent as Charles could have been. The minister only ought to be responsible for the acts of the Sovereign. If so, why not impeach Jefferies and retain James? The person of a King is sacred. Was the person of James considered sacred at the Boyne? To discharge cannon against an army in which a King is known to be posted is to approach pretty near to regicide. Charles, too, it should always be remembered, was put to death by men who had been exasperated by the hostilities of several years, and who had never been bound to him by any other tie than that which was common to them with all their fellow-citizens. Those who drove James from his throne, who seduced his army, who alienated his friends, who first imprisoned him in his palace, and then turned him out of it, who broke in upon his very slumbers by imperious messages, who pursued him with fire and sword from one part of the empire to another, who hanged, drew, and quartered his adherents, and attainted his innocent heir, were his nephew and his two daughters. When we reflect on

all these things, we are at a loss to conceive how the same persons who, on the fifth of November, thank God for wonderfully conducting his servant William, and for making all opposition fall before him until he became our King and Governor, can, on the thirtieth of January, contrive to be afraid that the blood of the Royal Martyr may be visited on themselves and their children.

§ 74. We disapprove, we repeat, of the execution of Charles; not because the constitution exempts the King from responsibility, for we know that all such maxims, however excellent, have their exceptions; nor because we feel any peculiar interest in his character, for we think that his sentence describes him with perfect justice as "a tyrant, a traitor, a murderer, and a public enemy"; but because we are convinced that the measure was most injurious to the cause of freedom. He whom it removed was a captive and a hostage: his heir, to whom the allegiance of every Royalist was instantly transferred, was at large. The Presbyterians could never have been perfectly reconciled to the father: they had no such rooted enmity to the son. The great body of the people, also, contemplated that proceeding with feelings which, however unreasonable, no government could safely venture to outrage.

§ 75. But though we think the conduct of the Regicides blameable, that of Milton appears to us in a very different light. The deed was done. It could not be undone. The evil was incurred; and the object was to render it as small as possible. We censure the chiefs of the army for not yielding to the popular opinion; but we cannot censure Milton for wishing to change that opinion. The very feeling which would have restrained us from committing the act would

have led us, after it had been committed, to defend it against the ravings of servility and superstition. For the sake of public liberty, we wish that the thing had not been done, while the people disapproved of it. But, for the sake of public liberty, we should also have wished the people to approve of it when it was done. If anything more were wanting to the justification of Milton, the book of Salmasius would furnish it. That miserable performance is now with justice considered only as a beacon to word-catchers who wish to become statesmen. The celebrity of the man who refuted it, the "Æneæ magni dextra", gives it all its fame with the present generation. In that age the state of things was different. It was not then fully understood how vast an interval separates the mere classical scholar from the political philosopher. Nor can it be doubted that a treatise which, bearing the name of so eminent a critic, attacked the fundamental principles of all free governments, must, if suffered to remain unanswered, have produced a most pernicious effect on the public mind.

§ 76. We wish to add a few words relative to another subject, on which the enemies of Milton delight to dwell, his conduct during the administration of the Protector. That an enthusiastic votary of liberty should accept office under a military usurper seems, no doubt, at first sight, extraordinary. But all the circumstances in which the country was then placed were extraordinary. The ambition of Oliver was of no vulgar kind. He never seems to have coveted despotic power. He at first fought sincerely and manfully for the Parliament, and never deserted it, till it had deserted its duty. If he dissolved it by force, it was not till he found that the few members who remained after so many deaths, secessions, and

expulsions, were desirous to appropriate to themselves a power which they held only in trust, and to inflict upon England the curse of a Venetian oligarchy. But even when thus placed by violence at the head of affairs, he did not assume unlimited power. He gave the country a constitution far more perfect than any which had at that time been known in the world. He reformed the representative system in a manner which has extorted praise even from Lord Clarendon. For himself he demanded indeed the first place in the commonwealth; but with powers scarcely so great as those of a Dutch stadtholder, or an American president. He gave the Parliament a voice in the appointment of ministers, and left to it the whole legislative authority, not even reserving to himself a veto on its enactments; and he did not require that the chief magistracy should be hereditary in his family. Thus far, we think, if the circumstances of the time and the opportunities which he had of aggrandising himself be fairly considered, he will not lose by comparison with Washington or Bolivar. Had his moderation been met by corresponding moderation, there is no reason to think that he would have overstepped the line which he had traced for himself. But when he found that his parliaments questioned the authority under which they met, and that he was in danger of being deprived of the restricted power which was absolutely necessary to his personal safety, then, it must be acknowledged, he adopted a more arbitrary policy.

§ 77. Yet, though we believe that the intentions of Cromwell were at first honest, though we believe that he was driven from the noble course which he had marked out for himself by the almost irresistible force of circumstances, though we admire, in common with all men of all parties, the ability and energy of his

splendid administration, we are not pleading for arbitrary and lawless power, even in his hands. We know that a good constitution is infinitely better than the best despot. But we suspect, that at the time of which we speak, the violence of religious and political enmities rendered a stable and happy settlement next to impossible. The choice lay, not between Cromwell and liberty, but between Cromwell and the Stuarts. That Milton chose well, no man can doubt who fairly compares the events of the protectorate with those of the thirty years which succeeded it, the darkest and most disgraceful in the English annals. Cromwell was evidently laying, though in an irregular manner, the foundations of an admirable system. Never before had religious liberty and the freedom of discussion been enjoyed in a greater degree. Never had the national honour been better upheld abroad, or the seat of justice better filled at home. And it was rarely that any opposition which stopped short of open rebellion provoked the resentment of the liberal and magnanimous usurper. The institutions which he had established, as set down in the Instrument of Government, and the Humble Petition and Advice, were excellent. His practice, it is true, too often departed from the theory of these institutions. But, had he lived a few years longer, it is probable that his institutions would have survived him, and that his arbitrary practice would have died with him. His power had not been consecrated by ancient prejudices. It was upheld only by his great personal qualities. Little, therefore, was to be dreaded from a second protector, unless he were also a second Oliver Cromwell. The events which followed his decease are the most complete vindication of those who exerted themselves to uphold his authority. His death dissolved the whole

frame of society. The army rose against the Parliament, the different corps of the army against each other. Sect raved against sect. Party plotted against party. The Presbyterians, in their eagerness to be revenged on the Independents, sacrificed their own liberty, and deserted all their old principles. Without casting one glance on the past, or requiring one stipulation for the future, they threw down their freedom at the feet of the most frivolous and heartless of tyrants.

§ 78. Then came those days, never to be recalled without a blush, the days of servitude without loyalty and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave. The King cringed to his rival that he might trample on his people, sank into a viceroy of France, and pocketed, with complacent infamy, her degrading insults, and her more degrading gold. The caresses of harlots, and the jests of buffoons, regulated the policy of the state. The government had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute. The principles of liberty were the scoff of every grinning courtier, and the Anathema Maranatha of every fawning dean. In every high place, worship was paid to Charles and James, Belial and Moloch; and England propitiated those obscene and cruel idols with the blood of her best and bravest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, till the race, accursed of God and man, was a second time driven forth, to wander on the face of the earth, and to be a by-word and a shaking of the head to the nations.

§ 79. Most of the remarks which we have hitherto made on the public character of Milton, apply to him only as one of a large body. We shall proceed to

notice some of the peculiarities which distinguished him from his contemporaries. And, for that purpose, it is necessary to take a short survey of the parties into which the political world was at that time divided. We must premise, that our observations are intended to apply only to those who adhered, from a sincere preference, to one or to the other side. In days of public commotion, every faction, like an Oriental army, is attended by a crowd of camp-followers, an useless and heartless rabble, who prowl round its line of march in the hope of picking up something under its protection, but desert it in the day of battle, and often join to exterminate it after a defeat. England, at the time of which we are treating, abounded with fickle and selfish politicians, who transferred their support to every government as it rose, who kissed the hand of the King in 1640, and spat in his face in 1649, who shouted with equal glee when Cromwell was inaugurated in Westminster Hall, and when he was dug up to be hanged at Tyburn, who dined on calves' heads, or stuck up oak-branches, as circumstances altered, without the slightest shame or repugnance. These we leave out of the account. We take our estimate of parties from those who really deserve to be called partisans.

§ 80. We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the Restoration, they were the theme of unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and of the stage, at the time when the press and the stage

were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were, as a body, unpopular; they could not defend themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists. The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.

"Ecco il fonte del riso, ed ecco il rio
Che mortali perigli in se contiene:
Hor qui tener a fren nostro desio,
Ed esser cauti molto a noi conviene."

§ 81. Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics. Most of their absurdities were mere external badges, like the signs of freemasonry, or the dresses of friars. We regret that these badges were not more attractive. We regret that a body to whose courage and talents mankind has owed inestimable obligations, had not the lofty elegance

which distinguished some of the adherents of Charles the First, or the easy good-breeding for which the court of Charles the Second was celebrated. But, if we must make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio in the play, turn from the specious caskets which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head, and fix on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.

§ 82. The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on his intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed. They recognized no title to superiority but his favour; and, confident of that favour, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train

of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged, on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the Evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God.

§ 83. Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker: but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious

or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane, he thought himself intrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year. Like Fleetwood, he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid his face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world, like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure,

and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier.

§ 84. Such we believe to have been the character of the Puritans. We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their minds was often injured by straining after things too high for mortal reach: and we know that, in spite of their hatred of Popery, they too often fell into the worst vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity, that they had their anchorites and their crusades, their Dunstans and their De Montforts, their Dominics and their Escobars. Yet, when all circumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body.

§ 85. The Puritans espoused the cause of civil liberty mainly because it was the cause of religion. There was another party, by no means numerous, but distinguished by learning and ability, which acted with them on very different principles. We speak of those whom Cromwell was accustomed to call the Heathens, men who were, in the phraseology of that time, doubting Thomases or careless Gallios with regard to religious subjects, but passionate worshippers of freedom. Heated by the study of ancient literature, they set up their country as their idol, and proposed to themselves the heroes of Plutarch as their examples. They seem to have borne some resemblance to the Brissotines of the French Revolution. But it is not very easy to draw the line of distinction between them and their devout associates, whose tone and manner they sometimes found it convenient to affect, and sometimes, it is probable, imperceptibly adopted.

§ 86. We now come to the Royalists. We shall

attempt to speak of them, as we have spoken of their antagonists, with perfect candour. We shall not charge upon a whole party the profligacy and baseness of the horse-boys, gamblers, and bravoes, whom the hope of license and plunder attracted from all the dens of Whitefriars to the standard of Charles, and who disgraced their associates by excesses which, under the stricter discipline of the Parliamentary armies, were never tolerated. We will select a more favourable specimen. Thinking as we do that the cause of the King was the cause of bigotry and tyranny, we yet cannot refrain from looking with complacency on the character of the honest old Cavaliers. We feel a national pride in comparing them with the instruments which the despots of other countries are compelled to employ, with the mutes who throng their antechambers, and the Janissaries who mount guard at their gates. Our royalist countrymen were not heartless, dangling courtiers, bowing at every step, and simpering at every word. They were not mere machines for destruction dressed up in uniforms, caned into skill, intoxicated into valour, defending without love, destroying without hatred. There was a freedom in their subserviency, a nobleness in their very degradation. The sentiment of individual independence was strong within them. They were indeed misled, but by no base or selfish motive. Compassion and romantic honour, the prejudices of childhood, and the venerable names of history, threw over them a spell potent as that of Duessa; and, like the Red-Cross Knight, they thought that they were doing battle for an injured beauty, while they defended a false and loathsome sorceress. In truth they scarcely entered at all into the merits of the political question. It was not for a treacherous king or an intolerant church that they fought, but for the

old banner, which had waved in so many battles over the heads of their fathers, and for the altars at which they had received the hands of their brides. Though nothing could be more erroneous than their political opinions, they possessed, in a far greater degree than their adversaries, those qualities which are the grace of private life. With many of the vices of the Round Table, they had also many of its virtues, courtesy, generosity, veracity, tenderness, and respect for women. They had far more both of profound and of polite learning than the Puritans. Their manners were more engaging, their tempers more amiable, their tastes more elegant, and their households more cheerful.

§ 87. Milton did not strictly belong to any of the classes which we have described. He was not a Puritan. He was not a free-thinker. He was not a Royalist. In his character the noblest qualities of every party were combined in harmonious union. From the Parliament and from the Court, from the conventicle and from the Gothic cloister, from the gloomy and sepulchral circles of the Roundheads, and from the Christmas revel of the hospitable Cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which those finer elements were defiled. Like the Puritans, he lived

"As ever in his great task-master's eye".

Like them, he kept his mind continually fixed on an Almighty Judge and an eternal reward. And hence he acquired their contempt of external circumstances, their fortitude, their tranquillity, their inflexible resolution. But not the coolest sceptic or the most profane scoffer was more perfectly free from the contagion of their frantic delusions, their savage manners, their

ludicrous jargon, their scorn of science, and their aversion to pleasure. Hating tyranny with a perfect hatred, he had nevertheless all the estimable and ornamental qualities which were almost entirely monopolized by the party of the tyrant. There was none who had a stronger sense of the value of literature, a finer relish for every elegant amusement, or a more chivalrous delicacy of honour and love. Though his opinions were democratic, his tastes and his associations were such as harmonize best with monarchy and aristocracy. He was under the influence of all the feelings by which the gallant Cavaliers were misled. But of those feelings he was the master and not the slave. Like the hero of Homer, he enjoyed all the pleasures of fascination; but he was not fascinated. He listened to the song of the Sirens; yet he glided by without being seduced to their fatal shore. He tasted the cup of Circe; but he bore about him a sure antidote against the effects of its bewitching sweetness. The illusions which captivated his imagination never impaired his reasoning powers. The statesman was proof against the splendour, the solemnity, and the romance which enchanted the poet. Any person who will contrast the sentiments expressed in his treatises on Prelacy with the exquisite lines on ecclesiastical architecture and music in the Penseroso, which was published about the same time, will understand our meaning. This is an inconsistency which, more than any thing else, raises his character in our estimation, because it shows how many private tastes and feelings he sacrificed, in order to do what he considered his duty to mankind. It is the very struggle of the noble Othello. His heart relents; but his hand is firm. He does nought in hate, but all in honour. He kisses the beautiful deceiver before he destroys her.

§ 88. That from which the public character of Milton derives its great and peculiar splendour still remains to be mentioned. If he exerted himself to overthrow a forsworn king and a persecuting hierarchy, he exerted himself in conjunction with others. But the glory of the battle which he fought for the species of freedom which is the most valuable, and which was then the least understood, the freedom of the human mind, is all his own. Thousands and tens of thousands among his contemporaries raised their voices against Ship-money and the Star-chamber. But there were few indeed who discerned the more fearful evils of moral and intellectual slavery, and the benefits which would result from the liberty of the press and the unfettered exercise of private judgment. These were the objects which Milton justly conceived to be the most important. He was desirous that the people should think for themselves as well as tax themselves, and should be emancipated from the dominion of prejudice as well as from that of Charles. He knew that those who, with the best intentions, overlooked these schemes of reform, and contented themselves with pulling down the King and imprisoning the malignants, acted like the heedless brothers in his own poem, who, in their eagerness to disperse the train of the sorcerer, neglected the means of liberating the captive. They thought only of conquering when they should have thought of disenchanting.

> "Oh, ye mistook! Ye should have snatched his wand
> And bound him fast. Without the rod reversed,
> And backward mutters of dissevering power,
> We cannot free the lady that sits here
> Bound in strong fetters fixed and motionless."

§ 89. To reverse the rod, to spell the charm back-

ward, to break the ties which bound a stupefied people to the seat of enchantment, was the noble aim of Milton. To this all his public conduct was directed. For this he joined the Presbyterians; for this he forsook them. He fought their perilous battle; but he turned away with disdain from their insolent triumph. He saw that they, like those whom they had vanquished, were hostile to the liberty of thought. He therefore joined the Independents, and called upon Cromwell to break the secular chain, and to save free conscience from the paw of the Presbyterian wolf. With a view to the same great object, he attacked the licensing system, in that sublime treatise which every statesman should wear as a sign upon his hand and as frontlets between his eyes. His attacks were, in general, directed less against particular abuses than against those deeply-seated errors on which almost all abuses are founded, the servile worship of eminent men and the irrational dread of innovation.

§ 90. That he might shake the foundations of these debasing sentiments more effectually, he always selected for himself the boldest literary services. He never came up in the rear, when the outworks had been carried and the breach entered. He pressed into the forlorn hope. At the beginning of the changes, he wrote with incomparable energy and eloquence against the bishops. But, when his opinion seemed likely to prevail, he passed on to other subjects, and abandoned prelacy to the crowd of writers who now hastened to insult a falling party. There is no more hazardous enterprise than that of bearing the torch of truth into those dark and infected recesses in which no light has ever shone. But it was the choice and the pleasure of Milton to penetrate the noisome vapours, and to brave the terrible explosion. Those who most dis-

approve of his opinions must respect the hardihood with which he maintained them. He, in general, left to others the credit of expounding and defending the popular parts of his religious and political creed. He took his own stand upon those which the great body of his countrymen reprobated as criminal, or derided as paradoxical. He stood up for divorce and regicide. He attacked the prevailing systems of education. His radiant and beneficent career resembled that of the god of light and fertility.

> "Nitor in adversum; nec me, qui cætera, vincit
> Impetus, et rapido contrarius evehor orbi."

§ 91. It is to be regretted that the prose writings of Milton should, in our time, be so little read. As compositions, they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. They abound with passages compared with which the finest declamations of Burke sink into insignificance. They are a perfect field of cloth of gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery. Not even in the earlier books of the Paradise Lost has the great poet ever risen higher than in those parts of his controversial works in which his feelings, excited by conflict, find a vent in bursts of devotional and lyric rapture. It is, to borrow his own majestic language, "a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies".

§ 92. We had intended to look more closely at these performances, to analyse the peculiarities of the diction, to dwell at some length on the sublime wisdom of the Areopagitica and the nervous rhetoric of the Iconoclast, and to point out some of those magnificent passages which occur in the Treatise of Reformation, and the Animadversions on the Remonstrant. But the length

to which our remarks have already extended renders this impossible.

§ 93. We must conclude. And yet we can scarcely tear ourselves away from the subject. The days immediately following the publication of this relic of Milton appear to be peculiarly set apart, and consecrated to his memory. And we shall scarcely be censured if, on this his festival, we be found lingering near his shrine, how worthless soever may be the offering which we bring to it. While this book lies on our table, we seem to be contemporaries of the writer. We are transported a hundred and fifty years back. We can almost fancy that we are visiting him in his small lodging; that we see him sitting at the old organ beneath the faded green hangings; that we can catch the quick twinkle of his eyes, rolling in vain to find the day; that we are reading in the lines of his noble countenance the proud and mournful history of his glory and his affliction. We image to ourselves the breathless silence in which we should listen to his slightest word, the passionate veneration with which we should kneel to kiss his hand and weep upon it, the earnestness with which we should endeavour to console him, if indeed such a spirit could need consolation, for the neglect of an age unworthy of his talents and his virtues, the eagerness with which we should contest with his daughters, or with his Quaker friend Elwood, the privilege of reading Homer to him, or of taking down the immortal accents which flowed from his lips.

§ 94. These are perhaps foolish feelings. Yet we cannot be ashamed of them; nor shall we be sorry if what we have written shall in any degree excite them in other minds. We are not much in the habit of idolizing either the living or the dead. And we think

that there is no more certain indication of a weak and ill-regulated intellect than that propensity which, for want of a better name, we will venture to christen Boswellism. But there are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balance and have not been found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize; and of these was Milton. The sight of his books, the sound of his name, are pleasant to us. His thoughts resemble those celestial fruits and flowers which the Virgin Martyr of Massinger sent down from the gardens of Paradise to the earth, and which were distinguished from the productions of other soils, not only by superior bloom and sweetness, but by miraculous efficacy to invigorate and to heal. They are powerful, not only to delight, but to elevate and purify. Nor do we envy the man who can study either the life or the writings of the great poet and patriot, without aspiring to emulate, not indeed the sublime works with which his genius has enriched our literature, but the zeal with which he laboured for the public good, the fortitude with which he endured every private calamity, the lofty disdain with which he looked down on temptations and dangers, the deadly hatred which he bore to bigots and tyrants, and the faith which he so sternly kept with his country and with his fame.

NOTES

page 1. The **Treatise on Christian Doctrine** is used by Macaulay merely as an excuse for a discussion of his own views about Milton. But later critics, like Stopford Brooke and Masson, have attached more importance to it. The former says in his monograph on Milton: "The views of Milton in theology and religion at the time when he wrote *Paradise Lost* are of importance towards the critical understanding, even towards the poetic appreciation of the poem. They are contained in the *Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, which was written at the close of his life and finished after the Restoration. To read it is to know, and with great exactness, the views he held at the time when he was composing *Paradise Lost*."

The MS. found in the State Paper Office has been traced by Professor Masson, and Lemon's ingenious conjecture has been superseded. In the last year of his life Milton published his Familiar Letters (in Latin), and intended to include in the same volume his State Letters (also in Latin). But being prohibited by the English Foreign Office from publishing them, he intrusted them, together with the Latin Treatise on Christian Doctrine, to a young Cambridge scholar, Daniel Skinner, one of the last of his amanuenses, who had been engaged specially in copying out and preparing for publication those two MSS. After Milton's death, Skinner negotiated with Elzevir, the Amsterdam printer, for the publication of both, but the English Government again interfering, the MSS. were given up by Elzevir to the Government, and were locked up in the State Paper Office as the most effective means to prevent the unauthorized publication of State documents dealing with State secrets.

§ 1.

l. 6. **the office of Secretary.** Milton was Latin Secretary to the Council of State which acted as the Executive Government after the execution of Charles I. in 1649. It is a mistake to regard this office as equivalent to that of our Foreign Secretary. Milton had no voice in determining the policy of the Commonwealth: he acted rather as the chief clerk of the Foreign Office, one important qualification for which was a knowledge of Latin, the Council scorning "to carry on their affairs in the wheedling, lisping jargon of the cringing French" (Phillips).

l. 7. **Popish trials,** in 1678; and the **Rye-House Plot,** in 1683, a plot to assassinate Charles II., in which some leading Whigs were incriminated, such as Algernon Sidney and Lord William Russell.

l. 12. **Wood,** Anthony à Wood (1632–1695), author of works on history and antiquities. His chief work is *Athenæ Oxonienses*, a history of distinguished men who had been connected with Oxford.

Toland (1669–1722) wrote a *Life of Milton* in 1698. His chief work is *Christianity not Mysterious*, a book supporting deistical views.

l. 13. **Cyriac Skinner,** a pupil of Milton's in 1647, and afterwards one of his most intimate friends. Phillips says he used to visit Milton more than any one else did. Two of Milton's sonnets are addressed to him.

l. 19. **Oxford parliament,** dissolved in 1681, to prevent the Exclusion Bill from being proceeded with. Its dissolution marked the triumph of the king and the discomfiture of the Whigs.

§ 2.

page 2, l. 3. **Mr. Sumner,** afterwards Bishop of Winchester (1827–1869). His brother was Archbishop of Canterbury.

§ 3.

l. 19. **our academical Pharisees.** Just as the Pharisees were noted among the Jews for their scrupulousness about forms and disregard for substance, so the writers of Latin essays at the English universities in Macaulay's day had regard only for the correctness of their Latin words and constructions, for which the great authority was Cicero, the most eminent of Latin prose writers. Milton, on the other hand, did not scruple to adopt a medieval Latin word or construction, if the theological idea he wished to express had no equivalent in classical Latin. Hence in this treatise there were many words "that would have made Quintilian" (the greatest of the Latin writers on style) "stare and gasp". The quotation is from one of Milton's own sonnets.

ll. 30, 31. **what Denham with great felicity says of Cowley.** Denham (1615–1668), author of *Cooper's Hill*, in an elegy on the death of Cowley, says:

> Horace his wit and Virgil's state
> He did not steal, but emulate;
> And when he would like them appear,
> Their garb, but not their clothes did wear.

Cowley (1618–1667) was considered by many of his contemporaries a greater poet than Milton. His chief poems are *Davideis* and

Pindaric Odes. His imitations of the Latin and Greek writers were regarded as so successful as to call forth Denham's eulogium.

§ 5.

page 3, l. 9. his Arianism; the heresy according to which Christ is regarded as a created being, existing before the world, but inferior to God. The name is from Arius, a priest of Alexandria, who lived at the beginning of the fourth century A.D.

ll. 9, 10. **theory on...polygamy.** Milton held that marriage was mainly a spiritual bond 'for the mutual aid and comfort of souls rather than of bodies', and that where this end was not attained, marriage should be ended by mutual consent. "It is less breach of wedlock to part, with wise and quiet consent betimes, than still to foil and profane that mystery of joy and union with a polluting sadness and perpetual distemper." He acted on this principle himself, and is said to have made suit to another lady on being left by his first wife, Mary Powell, within a month after marriage. He wrote at this juncture his books on the question of marriage—*The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, *The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce*, *Tetrachordon*, *Colasterion*—and these books, apart from Milton's own conduct, might have prepared readers for his defence of polygamy in the *Treatise of Christian Doctrine.*

ll. 14–16. **opinions...respecting the nature of the Deity**, &c. Milton believed that matter was not created out of nothing, but was produced out of God, and that therefore no created thing could be annihilated. He held also that the Jewish Sabbath was abrogated and was not binding on Christians.

ll. 16, 17. **the observation of the Sabbath.** The phrase now is invariably 'the *observance* of the Sabbath'. Addison uses the word 'observation' in the same way in the *Spectator*, No. 351, but it is now obsolete in this sense.

§ 6.

l. 23. **perverted by quartos**, as in the seventeenth century, when religious pamphlets not seldom effected a change of belief.

ll. 24, 25. **Defensio Populi.** Milton's Latin pamphlet, the Defence of the English People, a reply to the Defence of Charles I. by Salmasius in 1649, issued soon after the execution of the king.

§ 7.

l. 35. **Capuchins**, a branch of the Franciscan order of monks, so called from the *capuchon* or *capuce*, a cowl or hood which is the characteristic badge of the order.

§ 8.

page 4, l. 18. general suffrage of the civilized world. As early as 1663 the French ambassador wrote of *un nommé Miltonius* as the only one in recent times who maintained the reputation of the country for arts and sciences. Dryden's estimate of Milton is often quoted:

> Three poets in three distant ages born,
> Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
> The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
> The next in majesty; in both the last.
> The force of Nature could no further go;
> To make a third, she joined the former two.

§ 9.

page 5, l. 2. no poet has ever, &c. This is a favourite form of exaggeration with Macaulay. The particular thing he treats of is, for the time being, the most extraordinary of its kind.

l. 5. "**an age too late**". Cf. *Paradise Lost*, ix. 44, 45—

> unless an age too late, or cold
> Climate, or years, damp my intended wing.

A similar phrase occurs in the *Reason of Church Government*, Book ii.:

> If there be nothing adverse in our climate or the fate of this age.

l. 6. Johnson says in his *Life of Milton*: "There prevailed in his time an opinion that the world was in its decay, and that we have had the misfortune to be produced in the decrepitude of Nature. It was suspected that the whole creation languished, that neither trees nor animals had the height or bulk of their predecessors, and that everything was daily sinking by gradual diminution. Milton appears to suspect that souls partake of the general degeneracy, and is not without some fear that his book is to be written in *an age too late* for heroick poesy...Among this lagging race of frosty grovellers he might still have risen into eminence by producing something which *they should not willingly let die*...He might still be the giant of the pygmies, the one-eyed monarch of the blind."

§ 10.

ll. 23, 24. the earliest poets are generally the best. This "most orthodox article of literary faith" is easily seen to be a heresy when we remember that Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe—to name no others—lived amid an advanced civilization.

§ 11.

page 6, l. 2. the first speculators, the early thinkers or philosophers. A speculator is, literally, one who sees or spies out.

The old meaning of a 'thinker'—one who *sees into* the heart of things,—has nearly given way to the modern and commercial sense—one who *sees ahead* the movements of the market and operates accordingly.

l. 6. **Mrs. Marcet's dialogues.** Mrs. Marcet (1769–1858) wrote *Conversations on Political Economy*. She also wrote *Conversations on Chemistry*, a book which introduced Faraday to the subject in which he afterwards became famous.

l. 7. **Montague, Walpole,** the earliest of our great financiers. Montague had to do with the improvement of the coinage, the beginning of the National Debt, and the founding of the Bank of England. Walpole by his measures fostered the national commerce, though he failed to carry his great scheme of reform—the Excise Bill. He strikingly showed his financial ability by the way in which he restored public credit after the collapse of the South Sea Scheme in 1720.

l. 10. **the great Newton.** Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727). As a mathematician he is famous for his development of the higher mathematics, and as a physicist he is still more famous for his discovery of the law of universal gravitation. The statement is one of Macaulay's characteristic exaggerations. It is introduced by the phrase 'any intelligent man' instead of the more familiar 'every schoolboy'.

§ 12.

ll. 18, 19. **language, the machine of the poet.** 'Machine' here means instrument. But language is rather the *material* with which the poet works. The statement is obviously false. Milton's own poetry is the best refutation of it.

§ 13.

ll. 34, 35. **They give us...personified qualities instead of men.** That this is due to personal idiosyncrasies, not to the age, is clear from the fact that the age which produced Spenser, the poet of personified qualities *par excellence*, also produced Shakespeare, pre-eminent for his creations of men.

page 7, l. 5. **Shaftesbury** (1671–1713), author of *Characteristics of Men*, a metaphysician and philosopher, who speaks of conscience as 'a moral sense'.

l. 6. **Helvetius** (1715–1771), a French philosopher of the materialist school. In his book *de l'Esprit* he tried to prove that sensation is the source of all knowledge and intellectual activity.

l. 11. **Niobe.** According to the Greek legend, Niobe was the mother of six sons and six daughters. She boasted of these against Latona, the mother of one son, Apollo, and one daughter, Diana.

In revenge Latona ordered her children to kill all those of Niobe, and accordingly Apollo killed all the sons and Diana all the daughters. Niobe thus bereft of all her children was inconsolable and wept till she died. She was changed into a stone from which water kept constantly exuding.

l. 12. **Aurora**, the goddess of the dawn. Both Aurora and Niobe are favourite subjects of painters.

l. 18. **Mandeville** (1670–1733), author of the *Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Public Benefits*, in which the paradox is maintained that civilization is based on the vices of society.

Iago, the villain in Shakespeare's play of *Othello*.

§ 14.

l. 23. **Perhaps.** The word deserves to be noted because of its rarity in Macaulay's writings. Even he was not sure of the truth of his assertion, the fallacy of which has been shown by Lamb in his remarks on the 'Sanity of True Genius'. Lord Melbourne used to say he wished he could be as sure of *anything* as Macaulay was of *everything*.

l. 26. **By poetry we mean**, &c. It will be observed that this definition of poetry does not exclude prose fiction or impassioned oratory.

l. 34. **lines universally admired.** The quotation is from Shakespeare's *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, act v. sc. 1. 12:

> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And as imagination bodies forth, &c.

§ 15.

page 8, l. 21. **Hamlet or Lear.** The statement as to the effect of these tragedies on the mind only reveals Macaulay's want of psychological insight. The external manifestations of feeling may well be greater in the case of the little girl, but the feelings themselves in the case of a man are affected in a far higher degree. Of course a man is never so likely to be absorbed in the illusion as a child, and that escape from the illusion is only a result of experience. When Partridge went to the play (in *Tom Jones*) he was as much affected as any child could be.

§ 16.

ll. 32, 33. **In an enlightened age**, &c. The Elizabethan age, the age of Wordsworth and Scott, the Victorian age, may serve as tests of the value of this statement. It is true there is a certain antagonism between an age of criticism and an age of creation. But an age of creation is not incompatible with an enlightened age.

page 9, l. 9. The Greek Rhapsodists, who recited or sang the verses of Homer, somewhat after the fashion of the wandering harper in Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

l. 11. **Mohawk.** The Red Indian is noted for the insensibility to pain he displays, but his stoicism is certainly not due to the power of poetry over his mind.

§ 17.

l. 19. **Poetry produces an illusion,** &c. This paragraph should be carefully studied as a fine example of the skill with which Macaulay can use a simile.

§ 18.

page 10, l. 2. His very talents, &c. An opposite opinion has been expressed by a former Professor of Poetry: "So far is it from being true that reason has put out imagination, that perhaps there never was a time when reason so imperatively calls imagination to her aid, and when imagination enters so largely into all literary and even into scientific products" (Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry*, p. 58).

ll. 9 ff. **We have seen in our own time,** &c.... Wordsworth is referred to. His poetry had met with little success up to the time of Macaulay's writing. The explanations he gave of his theory of poetry in his prose prefaces had been appreciated by only a few. Macaulay seems to have derived some suggestions from them; *e.g.* in the appendix on *Poetic Diction*, Wordsworth remarks that "the earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative".

§ 19.

l. 18. **Rabbinical literature.** Writings of the Jewish Rabbis or expounders of the Jewish law.

l. 23. **Petrarch** (1304–1374), now famous chiefly for his sonnets to Laura, though he himself based his hopes of fame on his Latin poem *Africa*, an epic on the deeds of the elder Scipio.

l. 27. **Cowley, with all his admirable wit.** The word 'wit' is used here in its old-fashioned sense of keenness in detecting resemblances between things apparently having nothing in common. It was the special characteristic of the poets called by Dr. Johnson 'metaphysical'.

ll. 29, 30. **The authority of Johnson.** In a passage near the beginning of the *Life of Milton*, Johnson says: "He was at this time eminently skilled in the Latin tongue...But the products of his vernal fertility have been surpassed by many, and particularly by his contemporary Cowley." In the *Life of Cowley* he says that

Milton was "content to express the thoughts of the ancients in their language; Cowley...accommodates the diction of Rome to his own conceptions".

l. 32. **Augustan elegance,** the polish and refinement of the Latin poets of the time of Augustus. The greatest of the Latin poets—Virgil, Horace, Ovid, &c.—belong to this period.

§ 20.

page 11, l. 8. Epistle to Manso, a poem in Latin hexameters to Milton's Italian friend Manso, who befriended him during his two months' stay at Naples in 1639. Macaulay exaggerates the wonder that the same man should have written *Paradise Lost* and this Latin poem. But there is no such sharply defined antithesis between the originality of the one poem and the 'mimicry' or imitation of the other. Much of the beauty of *Paradise Lost* is derived from its recalling to the memory classical phrases and references.

ll. 19–22. The quotation is from *Paradise Lost*, iv. 551–554.

ll. 27–31. **So intense and ardent,** &c. The sentence is an expansion of Dr. Johnson's: "The heat of Milton's mind might be said to sublimate his learning".

§ 21.

page 12, ll. 1, 2. harmony of the numbers. This was the common phrase in use among eighteenth-century critics (like Johnson) to describe the smoothness of a line, the 'numbers' referring to the metre of a verse. Cf. Pope's "I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came".

ll. 3, 4. **no parodist to degrade.** The most successful parodist of Milton's style is John Philips in *The Splendid Shilling*.

§ 22.

l. 13. **The most striking characteristic,** &c. So Mr. Stopford Brooke in his monograph on Milton has said: "Allusiveness is a characteristic mark, and often a fault, of Milton's poetry", p. 19.

l. 21. **the Iliad.** Homer's great epic poem is remarkable for its directness and energy of movement.

ll. 29, 30. **He strikes the key-note, and expects,** &c. "A feat that 'every schoolboy' knows to be absurdly impossible, there being hundreds of different melodies starting from the same key-note" (Professor Minto in the *Manual of English Prose Literature*). Macaulay's ignorance of music is admitted by his biographer, who indeed speaks of one authentic instance on record of Macaulay's having known one tune from another, but it is mentioned as *the only one* (Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, p. 549, Popular Edition).

§ 23.

page 13, ll. 10, 11. **Cassim in the Arabian tale,** brother of Ali Baba in the *Arabian Nights*. When Cassim discovered that his brother had become rich with the hoards from the robbers' cave, he thought to enrich himself too. On going to the cave he cried, "Open, Sesame", and the door opened. Having filled his sacks with booty he wished to go out, but forgot the magic formula, and cried, "Open, Barley". The door remained closed to this cry, and the robber band, returning, found him there and killed him.

l. 13. **The miserable failure of Dryden.** Dryden published in 1674 a dramatic poem, *The State of Innocence*, based on the *Paradise Lost*. The story is told that when Dryden visited Milton he asked permission to adapt *Paradise Lost*, and received the answer, "Ay, you may tag my verses".

§ 24.

ll. 20, 21. **muster-rolls of names.** For examples, see *Paradise Lost*, i. 575–587, iv. 269–284, and xi. 387–411.

§ 26.

page 14, l. 26. **the tragedies of Byron.** *Cain*, *Manfred*, *Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari*, *Sardanapalus*, *Werner*, &c. In his Essay on Lord Byron, Macaulay points out the non-dramatic quality of these plays: "Lord Byron had nothing dramatic in his genius. All his characters...are essentially the same...It is hardly too much to say that Lord Byron could exhibit only one man, and only one woman...He was himself the beginning, the middle, and the end of all his own poetry, the hero of every tale, the chief object in every landscape. Harold, Lara, Manfred, and a crowd of other characters, were universally considered merely as loose incognitos of Lord Byron."

l. 29. **Mr. Newbery.** The reference is to the well-known publishing house of Newbery in St. Paul's Churchyard—the predecessors of Griffith and Farran. Its founder, John Newbery, who published Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* and Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, and who is mentioned in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, was the first publisher to make a specialty of children's books, including the kind now known as 'toy-books'. He died in 1767.

l. 34. **the frown and sneer of Harold.** Childe Harold, the 'pilgrim' of the poem which made Byron famous, was but a thin disguise for Byron himself. His cynicism and discontent appear in all the heroes of his plays, who consequently fail as dramatic personages, just as Browning's characters often fail through the obtrusion of the author's own personality.

§ 27.

page 15, l. 6. The Greek drama. It differs from the English drama in many respects. It is primarily a lyrical drama. The chorus, consisting of a few friends or neighbours of the chief character, gives expression in song to the sentiments of the onlooker as the tragedy proceeds. The odes of the chorus formed the original nucleus of the Greek drama. The dialogue, or conversation between the 'dramatis personæ', was subsequently added. But to the last the Greek drama admitted of few characters, and the chorus remained an essential, if not the most important, part.

l. 12. **Æschylus,** 525–456 B.C., four centuries after Homer. He fought for Athens against the Persians and was wounded at the great Athenian victory of Marathon (490 B.C.). This victory, followed up by others, changed the feeling of the Greeks for the Asiatics from awe to contempt. One proof of the close connection that had existed between the Greeks and the East is that the Greek alphabet was derived from the Phoenicians.

l. 18. **Herodotus,** the earliest of the Greek historians, a contemporary of Æschylus. The second book of his History deals with his travels in Egypt.

l. 24. **Pindar,** the greatest lyric writer of the Greeks, a contemporary of the preceding. Cowley imitated him in his *Pindaric Odes*, and Gray has also taken him for his model in his odes, *e.g. The Bard.*

ll. 25, 26. **The book of Job,** &c. It is now a commonplace of Biblical criticism that the book of Job is a drama.

l. 30. **Clytæmnestra,** the wife of Agamemnon, who was the leader of the Greeks in the Trojan war. Æschylus' play of *Agamemnon* deals with the return of the Greek chief after his ten years' absence at Troy, and the speech delivered by Clytæmnestra on the occasion is not dramatic but descriptive.

ll. 31, 32. **the seven Argive chiefs.** In Æschylus' play *The Seven against Thebes*, these Greek chiefs are each described in long separate speeches, which seem as important as the action of the play itself.

page 16, l. 1. Sophocles, 496–405 B.C. Some of his characters, such as Antigone, are considered fit to be put beside Shakespeare's. But the lyric nature of the Greek drama prevented him from giving the same vivid presentation of his characters that distinguished Shakespeare's.

l. 6. **Euripides,** 480–406 B.C. His plays are *Medea*, *Alcestis*, *Electra*, &c. He is called "sad Electra's poet" by Milton in one of his sonnets.

§ 28.

l. 17. **Queen of Fairy-land.**—Titania, Queen of the Fairies, in Shakespeare's *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, is subjected to a charm under the influence of which she imagines beauty in the first thing her eyes light upon. She sees Bottom, a weaver who has had his head changed by Puck (a mischievous fairy) into an ass's head, and at once begins to dote on him.

l. 35. **the wild and barbaric melody.** As an example, the lines in which Samson laments his blindness may be given:

> O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
> Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
> Without all hope of day.

§ 29.

page 17, ll. 4, 5. Comus is framed on the model of the Italian Masque. The Masque, which was introduced into England from Italy in the sixteenth century, differed from the regular drama in several respects. (1) The plot was shorter and simpler in the Masque. (2) The story was little else than an acted allegory, being usually based on some mythological or classical tale. (3) An appeal was made to the senses rather than to the intellect, the story being usually subordinate to the dresses, the dances, the scenery, and the music. (4) Masques were usually composed for some remarkable occasion, such as a marriage, a royal visit, or (as in the case of *Comus*) on a governor entering upon his office. (5) Complimentary references were introduced in the Masque to those in whose honour it was prepared. *Comus* has all these characteristics of the Masque except (3). The scenic element is decidedly subordinate to the intellectual and ethical.

A good deal of criticism wide of the mark has been directed against *Comus*, because these points of difference between the Drama and the Masque have been overlooked. Dr. Johnson, for example, says of it, "As a drama it is deficient". Macaulay has rightly criticised it as a poem, of an artificial sort, it is true, but still conforming to the rules of the class of poetry to which it belongs. "He has succeeded, wherever success was not impossible."

l. 8. **the Faithful Shepherdess**, a masque by Fletcher (1576–1625), which supplied Milton with the general idea, as well as many of the particular devices and imagery, of *Comus*. Todd remarks, "He caught also from the lyric rhymes of Fletcher that *Dorique delicacy* with which Sir Henry Wotton was so much delighted in the songs of Milton's drama".

l. 9. **Aminta**, a pastoral play by Tasso (1544–1595), the great Italian poet. His greatest work is his epic poem *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, an idealized account of the first Crusade. The *Aminta* was written in 1581.

l. 10. **Pastor Fido.** *Il Pastor Fido* ('The Faithful Shepherd') is a pastoral play composed in 1585 on the model of *Aminta*). It is by Guarini (1538–1612) of Ferrara in Italy.

l. 23. **May-day.** The reference is to the antics of 'Jack-in-the-Green', a remnant of the old May-day festivities now fallen into disuse. On that day some of the sweeps of London used to perambulate the streets, one concealed under a large framework decked with green-stuff and flowers, his mates dressed in fantastic finery, one usually as a woman. Dancing to the music of pipe and drum they collected halfpence from the shopkeepers.

§ 30.

page 18, ll. 6, 7. **Sir Henry Wotton** (1568–1639), a distinguished scholar and patron of men of letters. He acted for James I. as ambassador in Venice. His own definition of an ambassador gives some idea of his wit: "An honest gentleman sent to *lie* abroad for the good of his country". He was himself an author in a small way, his lines on "The Character of a Happy Life" being his best-known effort. The soundness of his critical faculty is shown by his selection of the lyrical parts of *Comus* for special praise.

ll. 8, 9. **Dorique delicacy.** The Doric is the dialect of the Greek language employed in pastoral poetry; for example, in the poems of the greatest of pastoral writers, Theocritus. No greater praise, therefore, could be given than to attribute to Milton's *Comus* something of the quality found in the best of pastoral poetry. The Scottish dialect is often called the Doric, and with justice: it is the musical dialect of the English language.

l. 16. **Genius,** or the Attendant Spirit, one of the characters in the *Comus*. The masque opens with the Spirit descending, but he afterwards appears as Thyrsis disguised in the dress of a shepherd.

> I must put off
> These my sky-robes, spun out of Iris' woof,
> And take the weeds and likeness of a swain.
> —*Comus*, 82–84.

l. 23. **Elysian dew.** Elysium was, in ancient mythology, the abode of the blessed after death:

> where souls unbodied dwell
> In ever-flowing meads of asphodel.—*Pope.*
>
> Iris there with humid bow
> Waters the odorous banks, that blow
> Flowers of more mingled hue
> Than her purfled scurf can shew
> And drenches with Elysian dew
> Beds of hyacinth and roses.—*Comus*, 992–997.

l. 26. **Hesperides,** daughters of Hesperus, who had to guard the

tree with the golden apples, and were assisted in this by a dragon. It was one of the labours of Hercules to obtain possession of these golden apples.

> All amidst the gardens fair
> Of Hesperus and his daughters three
> That sing about the golden tree.—*Comus*, 981–983.

The last part of this sentence is a mosaic of quotations from the song of the Spirit at the end of *Comus*:

> And west winds with musky wing
> About the cedarn alleys fling
> Nard and cassia's balmy smells.—989–991.

§ 31.

ll. 33, 34. **blindness of parental affection.** It is commonly supposed that Milton preferred his *Paradise Regained* to his *Paradise Lost*, but there is no foundation for this belief, except the statement by his nephew Phillips: "It (the *Paradise Regained*) is generally censured to be much inferior to the other, though he could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him".

§ 32.

page 19, ll. 12, 13. the Divine Comedy. *Divina Commedia*, the great work of the greatest of the Italian poets, Dante (1265–1321). He is called by Macaulay the father of Tuscan (or Italian) literature, just as Chaucer has been called the father of English poetry. He is also called by Macaulay 'the Florentine poet', from his having been born in Florence. The *Divine Comedy* consists of three parts, the *Inferno*, or Hell, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*.

§ 33.

l. 20. **the hieroglyphics of Egypt**, the characters employed in the writings on the obelisks and monuments. The key to these characters was found in the Rosetta stone (discovered by the French in 1799), on which were three inscriptions—one in hieroglyphics, one in Greek, and one in demotic characters. There was no clue to their meaning in the hieroglyphics themselves, whereas the picture-writing of Mexico reproduces the objects intended to be understood.

page 20, l. 5. circle of hell. Dante describes hell as divided into a descending series of nine circles, each of which has a different class of sinners, the depth of the circle increasing with the enormity of the sin. In the opening lines of canto 12, there is a description of the descent from the sixth to the seventh circle:

> The place where to descend the precipice
> We came, was rough as Alp, and on its verge
> Such object lay, as every eye would shun.

As is that ruin, which Adice's stream
On this side Trento struck, should'ring the wave,
Or loos'd by earthquake or for lack of prop;
For from the mountain's summit, whence it moved
To the low level, so the headlong rock
Is shivered, that some passage it might give
To him who from above would pass; e'en such
Into the chasm was that descent.—(Cary's Translation.)

ll. 6, 7. **The cataract of Phlegethon,** the river of fire. Canto 16, lines 94–105:

E'en as the river, that holds on its course
Unmingled, from the mount of Vesulo
On the left side of Apennine, toward
The east, which Acquacheta higher up
They call, ere it descend into the vale . . .
Rebellows o'er Saint Benedict, rolled on
From the Alpine summit down a precipice,
Where space enough to lodge a thousand spreads;
Thus downward from a craggy steep we found
That this dark wave resounded, roaring loud,
So that the ear its clamour soon had stunned.
—(Cary's Tr.)

ll. 8, 9. **the heretics were confined in burning tombs,** in the sixth circle of hell.

As where Rhone stagnates on the plains of Arles . .
The place is all thick spread with sepulchres;
So was it here, save what in horror here
Excelled; for midst the graves were scattered flames,
Wherewith intensely all throughout they burned,
That iron for no craft there hotter needs.
Canto 9, lines 111–118 (Cary's Tr.).

§ 34.

l. 15. **In one passage.** *Paradise Lost*, i. 196–209.

l. 20. **like Teneriffe or Atlas.** *Paradise Lost*, iv. 987.

l. 23. **the spectre of Nimrod.**

His visage seemed
In length and bulk, as doth the pine, that tops
St. Peter's Roman fane; and the other bones
Of like proportion, so that from above
The bank, which girdled him below, such height
Arose his stature, that three Frieslanders
Had striven in vain to reach but to his hair.
Canto 31, lines 52–58 (Cary's Tr.).

l. 31. **Mr. Cary's translation.** Rev. Francis Cary (1772–1844), assistant-keeper at the British Museum, produced (1805–1812) what is yet considered an excellent translation of Dante. Later translators are Rossetti, Longfellow, and Dr. Carlyle.

§ 35.

ll. 34, 35. **the lazar-house in the eleventh book of the Paradise Lost,** lines 477–493.

l. 35. **the last ward of Malebolge.**

> As were the torment, if each lazar-house
> Of Valdichiana,[1] in the sultry time
> 'Twixt July and September, with the isle
> Sardinia, and Maremma's[2] pestilent fen
> Had heaped their maladies all in one foss
> Together; such was here the torment: dire
> The stench, as issuing steams from festered limbs.
> Canto 29, lines 44–50 (Cary's Tr.).

§ 36.

page 21, l. 19. **Dante is the eye-witness,** &c. In this respect Dante may be considered superior to Milton. Mr. Stopford Brooke says: "There is no true horror or pain in Milton's hell. He never *saw* the damned" (*Milton*, p. 100).

ll. 21, 22. **spirits crying out for the second death.** In Canto 13 of the *Inferno*, the suicides in the seventh circle are thus described:

> Lo! on our left-hand side appeared two
> Naked and scratched, fleeing so hard away
> They all the framework of the wood broke through
> The one before, "Come, Death, haste, I pray".

l. 23. **the portal within which there is no hope,** a reference to the famous lines inscribed above the entrance to Dante's Hell:

> "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here", &c.

l. 24. **Gorgon.** Medusa, the Gorgon, had (according to classical mythology) the power of changing into stone those who looked on her. Hence Dante was told by his guide Virgil on encountering Medusa to keep his face hid; "for if the Gorgon dire be shown and thou should'st view it, thy return upwards would be for ever lost" (Hell, canto 9).

ll. 25, 26. **Barbariccia and Draghignazzo,** the fiends who with hooks torment the lost in the lake of boiling pitch in Male-

[1] Valdichiana, the valley of the river Chiana in Tuscany.
[2] Maremma is another Tuscan swamp near the sea-shore.

bolge. Of one of the damned Dante says, "They grappled him with more than hundred hooks", just as the cook tries "to thrust the flesh into the caldron down with flesh-hooks, that it float not on the top". These fiends, being baffled of their sport with one of the lost, pursued Virgil and Dante, who barely escaped from their "evil talons".

ll. 26–29. **His own hands...the purifying angel.** In these three sentences we have roughly a reference to the three divisions of Dante's poem, *Hell*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*. Dante and Virgil make their way out of Hell by "grasping the shaggy sides of Lucifer", the King of Hell. The second part of the poem deals with the ascent of the Mount of Purgatory. The angel purified him before entering Paradise.

l. 35. **Amadis,** the hero of a medieval prose romance, originally written in Portuguese, then translated into Spanish, and finally into French. He had all the accomplishments of the perfect knight, and was the ideal of chivalry.

Gulliver, Captain Lemuel Gulliver, the hero of *Gulliver's Travels*, by Swift (1726). The four parts of the book describe the voyages (1) to Lilliput, the country of the pygmies; (2) to Brobdingnag, the country of the giants; (3) to Laputa, the flying island; and (4) to the Houyhnhnms or philosophizing horses, and the Yahoos or degraded men.

page 22, l. 12. **Rotherhithe,** or Redriff, a district of London, situated in Surrey, on the right bank of the Thames, adjoining Bermondsey. The locality, a famous haunt of seafaring people, is mentioned definitely by Swift to throw an air of reality round his story.

§ 37.

l. 23. **machinery,** "a term invented by the critics", said Pope in his preface to the *Rape of the Lock*, "to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Dæmons, are made to act in a Poem".

§ 39.

page 23, ll. 14–16. **The first inhabitants of Greece... worshipped one invisible Deity.** The opposite view is generally held, that polytheism prevailed first, and that when monotheism, or the idea of one God, was grasped by the Greek philosophers, a great step was taken—a step only possible to a people capable of forming abstract ideas.

l. 19. **the Persians,** like other primitive peoples, adored the forces of Nature under certain personifications, but later worshipped the Sun as the supreme manifestation of Nature power.

ll. 28, 29. **secondary causes . . . for the rapidity,** &c. In the famous fifteenth chapter of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the*

Roman Empire, Gibbon speaks of the first or primary cause as "the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and the ruling Providence of its great author". The secondary or subsidiary causes he mentions are the zeal of the early Christians; the doctrine of immortality; the working of miracles; the purity and austerity of the Christian morals; and the union and discipline of the Christian republic.

page 24, ll. 1–8. **It was before Deity**, &c. This sentence is one of the best examples of Macaulay's preference of the concrete for the abstract.

l. 5. **the Synagogue.** The Jewish Church; so called from the importance of the synagogue in that Church after the captivity of the Jews in Babylon.

l. 6. **the doubts of the Academy.** The Academy was the name given to those Greek philosophers who adopted the system of Plato. They were so called from Plato having taught in the 'Academy'—that is, the garden in Athens that had belonged to Academus. The later teachers of this philosophy, the Neo-Platonists, were deeply tainted with scepticism, so that when Christianity spread in the Roman Empire the 'Academic' was the typical philosophy of doubt.

ll. 6, 7. **the pride of the Portico.** The Portico stands for the school of Greek philosophy founded by Zeno, who taught under a portico or porch in Athens. The school is more commonly known as 'the Stoics', from the Greek word 'stoa', a porch. One of their tenets was that the wise man was king of himself and superior to all adversity: hence, 'the pride of the Portico' (*v.* note on paragraph 83).

l. 7. **the fasces of the Lictor.** The chief power in the Roman Republic was intrusted to two consuls, who were attended each by twelve lictors carrying a bundle of rods (*fasces*) and an axe as the symbol of the consul's power of punishing with scourging or death. The phrase, therefore, simply means, the civil power of Rome. **The swords of thirty legions** is the military power of Rome, the legion being an important division of the Roman army.

ll. 11, 12. **Patron saints assumed the offices of household gods.** Every family in pagan Rome had its family gods—Penates and Lares. Offerings were made to them at every meal, and their presence and aid were invoked at every important family ceremony.

l. 12. **St. George**, the patron saint of England. There is much controversy as to what historical personage this St. George is, but he is generally supposed to have been a martyr in the persecution of the Christians by Diocletian. He is represented as killing the dragon, an allegorical way of expressing the triumph of the Christian hero over evil. As a warrior, he takes in the Christian church the place of Mars, the god of war in Roman mythology.

l. 13. **St. Elmo.** The electric flashes seen playing round the masts of ships in stormy weather were called by the Romans Castor and Pollux, and were regarded as betokening the end of the storm. If the light appeared undivided, it was the sign that the worst of the storm was yet to come. St. Elmo's fire is the modern equivalent of Castor and Pollux.

l. 14. **Cecilia,** a martyr of the third century. She is the patron saint of musicians. She is regarded as the inventor of the organ, and is referred to in Dryden's famous *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*. Her festival day is the 22nd November.

l. 15. **Venus.** The goddess of love in Roman mythology. **the Muses.** In ancient mythology the goddesses (nine in number) of learning and accomplishments—music, dancing, history, tragedy, &c.

l. 24. **in politics the same rule holds good.** The truth of this statement is well illustrated by the distinguished traveller and war correspondent, G. W. Steevens, in his book on America, *The Land of the Dollar*. He says: "Everything must be brought to the surface, embodied in a visible, palpable form. For a fact to make any effect on the American mind, it must be put in a shape where it can be seen, heard, and handled. If you want to impress your fellows, you must do it, not through their reasoning powers, but through the five senses of their bodies. . . . His patriotism seems always to centre rather on his flag than on his country: he can see the flag, but he can't see the country" (p. 310).

l. 27. **interested for.** The more common expression would be 'The interest of the multitude is more easily aroused for'.

§ 41.

page 26, l. 15. Don Juan. In Mozart's opera of *Don Giovanni*, Don Juan (otherwise Giovanni) asks a statue to a banquet, and it thereupon takes its place at table.

l. 19. **Farinata,** as a heretic, is punished by being confined within a burning tomb. The scene between him and Dante is described in canto 10 of the *Hell*. Farinata, a noble Florentine, had, as leader of the Ghibellines, utterly defeated the Guelphs at the river Arbia, but had singly withstood the razing of Florence to the ground.

l. 22. **auto da fe** (Portuguese), act (*i.e.* judicial decree) of faith: the sentence pronounced by the Inquisition on heretics; then the burning of heretics.

l. 23. **the first interview of Dante and Beatrice.** Dante when a boy of nine had seen Beatrice Portinari, and had been so impressed that in all his poetry she appears as his ideal woman. She is the subject of his love sonnets, *Vita Nuova*. The passage referred to is in the *Purgatory*, canto 30:

> Soon as mine eye perceived that glorious ray
> With which in former times my bosom glowed

Ere boyhood yet had wholly passed away
I turned unto the left,—e'en like a child,
That to its mother runs with panting breast,

. . . . . .

To say to Virgil: "Flows not through my frame
One drop of blood that trembles not; confest
Are all the traces of my ancient flame".

. . . . . .

"Dante, weep not that Virgil leaves thee here—
Weep not as yet; for know, another sword
Of sharper edge shall cause thee many a tear."
With regal air and look, wherein disdain
Was pictured still, proceeding thus, she said
(Like one who doth her bitterest taunt retain).

. . . . . .

"Yes, I am Beatrice; regard me well:
And hast thou deigned at last to ascend the mount,
Where joys unspeakable for ever dwell?"
—Wright's Translation.

§ 42.

l. 35. **fee-faw-fum.** This is an example of Macaulay's use of a homely expression for the sake of vividness. It is taken, of course, from the doggerel rhyme of the Giant in the nursery story of Jack the Giant-killer: "Fee-faw-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman". It stands for the childish descriptions of evil spirits.

Tasso (see note on page 17, l. 9) introduces supernatural beings as the usual machinery of epic poems.

Klopstock (1724–1803), a German poet, author of the *Messiah*, a poem suggested by Milton's epic.

page 27, l. 1. Addison had anticipated Macaulay in much the same defence of Milton in *Spectator*, No. 315. He excepts the Limbo of Vanity in book iii. as incongruous.

§ 43.

The family likeness of Milton, Æschylus, and the Hebrew prophets has been remarked also by Taine in his *History of English Literature*. Of Milton he says: "It was not *life* that he felt, like the masters of the Renaissance, but *greatness*, like Æschylus and the Hebrew seers, manly and lyric spirits like his own, who, nourished like him in religious emotions and continuous enthusiasm, like him displayed sacerdotal pomp and majesty".

l. 16. **the God of Light**, Apollo, the Sun-God; **the Goddess of Desire**, Venus.

ll. 17, 18. **labyrinths of eternal granite**, the temples of Luxor and Karnak at Thebes in Upper Egypt.

l. 18. **Osiris.** In Egyptian mythology Osiris is the brother and husband of Isis, and is worshipped under the form of an ox. He is the judge of the dead and the ruler of the world of ghosts.

l. 23. **Titans.** In the mythology of Greeks and Romans the Titans are the children of heaven and earth—giants who warred against Jupiter, the king of the gods, after Saturn's overthrow.

l. 24. **Furies,** the avenging goddesses.

l. 25. **Prometheus** stole fire from heaven to give to men. For this he was chained by Jupiter to a rock in the Caucasus, and an eagle preyed every day on his liver. The story forms the subject of one of the best plays of Æschylus—the *Prometheus Bound.*

page 28, ll. 3, 4. But Satan is a creature of another sphere. The sentence is an echo of one of Shakespeare's lines in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*:

> But we are spirits of another sort.—iii. 2. 388.

§ 44.

ll. 20, 21. **modern beggars for fame,** &c., like Rousseau and Byron.

§ 45.

l. 28. **loftiness of spirit.** This characteristic of Milton is well illustrated in his Sonnet to Cyriac Skinner on his blindness:

> Yet I argue not
> Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
> Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
> Right onward.

In his prose works he says: "A certain reservedness of nature, an honest haughtiness and self-esteem, kept me still above those low descents of mind"; and further, "Every free and gentle spirit ought to be born a knight". Johnson says of him, "his natural port is gigantic loftiness".

l. 29. **intensity of feeling.** Carlyle in his *Lectures on Heroes* has pronounced the same opinion about Dante: "He is world-great, not because he is world-wide, but because he is world-deep. Through all objects he pierces, as it were, down into the heart of Being. I know nothing so *intense* as Dante...One smiting word; and then there is silence."

l. 31. **pride struggling with misery.** In canto 17 of the *Paradise* is the famous passage: "How bitter is the taste of another's bread, and how hard the way to descend and climb by another's stairs".

page 29, ll. 4, 5. Sardinian soil. Sardinia was said to produce a herb so bitter that no one could taste it without twitching the face. Some think, however, that the story arose from an attempt

to explain Homer's phrase, 'sardanion gelān', to laugh with a sad or evil heart. 'Sardonic laughter' is laughter that covers pain or malice.

l. 7. **the Hebrew poet.** *Jobˇ* x. 22.

ll. 15, 16. **the haggard and woful stare,** &c. Professor Minto objected to this passage that the feeling of despair expressed by the eye is incongruous with the feeling of contempt expressed by the lip. The objection seems hypercritical. Carlyle in his *Lectures on Heroes* says: "I think it is the mournfulest face that ever was painted from reality; an altogether tragic, heart-affecting face . . . A soft ethereal soul looking-out so stern, implacable, grim-trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice! Withal it is a silent pain too, a silent, scornful one: the lip is curled in a kind of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating out his heart,—as if it were withal a mean insignificant thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and strangle were greater than it."

§ 46.

l. 20. **like Dante,** &c. Dante's first love, Beatrice Portinari, had married another, and his own married life is thought, from some phrases in his poems, to have been unhappy. The political party to which he belonged—the Ghibelline, or rather the White Guelfs—had been overthrown by the opposing faction of the Black Guelfs, and Dante was in 1302 banished from Florence on pain of death. He spent his last years in exile in other Italian towns. He died at Ravenna in 1321, and was buried there.

ll. 21–23. **He had survived . . . party.** Milton became totally blind in 1654, having lost his sight (as he boasted in a Sonnet) 'in liberty's defence', *i.e.* in writing the pamphlets in defence of Charles I.'s execution. He certainly survived 'the prosperity of his party', and was for a time in hiding after the Restoration in 1660, as it was thought the defender of regicide might share the fate of the regicides themselves. But it is incorrect to say he survived 'the comforts of his home'. Though unfortunate with his first wife, who died in 1652, he seems to have been happy with his second (married in 1656) and with his third (married in 1663). The house he lived in in London after the Restoration was a small one, but certainly not a 'hovel'.

ll. 23–29. **Of the great men,** &c. Ireton had died in 1651, Cromwell in 1658, and Bradshaw in 1659; Ludlow was an exile in Switzerland, where he died in 1693; Hutchinson died in 1664 of the hardships he suffered in prison; Vane was executed in 1662 as a traitor.

l. 29. **Venal and licentious scribblers.** Dryden, Dorset, Rochester, Sedley, Etherege, Wycherley, were all licentious writers, and some of them venal. But their talents were much higher than Macaulay allows.

l. 34. **the rabble of Comus**, the 'rout of monsters' accompanying Comus. They are "headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women".

page 30, ll. 8–12. **Neither blindness, nor gout**, &c. The rhythm of this sentence is an obvious imitation of St. Paul's fine peroration at the end of the eighth chapter of *Romans*.

ll. 16, 17. **on the eve of great events**, &c. In 1639, when "the melancholy intelligence which I received of the civil commotions in England made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home" (*Defensio Secunda*).

§ 47.

l. 29. **Theocritus**, a Sicilian Greek, who lived in the third century B.C. He is famous as a writer of pastoral poetry.

Ariosto (1474–1533), an Italian poet who lived in Ferrara, and wrote the *Orlando Furioso*.

l. 35. **Oriental haram**. The women's apartments in the houses in Mohammedan countries are known by the name of 'haram' or 'harem' (Arabic *harām* = forbidden).

page 31, l. 6. **avalanche**. The word 'glacier' would have been more appropriate, but the voice cannot dwell on it at the end of an epigrammatic sentence and a climactic paragraph with the same stress as on the word 'avalanche'.

§ 48.

l. 11. **undervalued by critics**, *e.g.* Dr. Johnson: "Of the best it can only be said that they are not bad".

l. 13. **Filicaja** (1642–1707), an Italian poet born at Florence. He is called by Macaulay in the *Essay on Addison* "the greatest lyric poet of modern times".

l. 15. **Petrarch** (1304–1374), *v.* note on par. 19.

ll. 18–24. **A victory**, &c. It should be noted that the sequence of these phrases is determined by their length. A victory is celebrated in Sonnet XV. 'on the Lord General Fairfax at Colchester'; Sonnet VIII. was written 'when the assault was intended to the city' of London after the battle of Edgehill in 1642; Sonnet XIX. 'on his blindness' was written in a fit of depression; Sonnets XX. and XXI. are playful invitations to his friends Laurence and Skinner respectively; Sonnet XI. is 'on the detraction which followed upon my writing certain treatises' on divorce, especially the book 'called *Tetrachordon*'; Sonnet XXIII. is 'on his deceased wife': "Methought I saw my late espoused saint . . . I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night".

l. 26. **the Greek Anthology**, a collection of detached pieces of poetry, often anonymous. Anthology is literally 'a collection of flowers'.

Collects, the forms of prayer in the English Book of Common Prayer suited to a particular day or occasion. Milton's sonnet on the Piedmont massacres is a prayer:

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints," &c.

§ 50.

page 32, ll. 11, 12. **Oromasdes and Arimanes**, the opposing principles in Zoroaster's explanation of the universe, Oromasdes being the good spirit, and Arimanes the evil spirit. They are in perpetual conflict, neither getting the better of the other.

l. 18. **American forests.** Freedom was secured in North America by the War of Independence, which ended in 1783, and between 1810 and 1825 the Spanish colonies in South America—Peru, Colombia, &c.—revolted, and secured their independence.

l. 19. **roused Greece.** The War of Independence in Greece began in 1821, and was practically concluded with the battle of Navarino in 1827. Greece had since its conquest by the Romans in 146 B.C. been subject to a succession of conquerors, of whom the Turks were the last.

ll. 20, 21. **from one end of Europe to the other.** After the battle of Waterloo, the Holy Alliance of the chief Continental Powers was formed for the maintenance of the existing state of things, and for the suppression of Revolutionary movements. By 1825, however, there had been several attempts to secure constitutional government, notably in Italy and Spain.

§ 51.

l. 33. **the lion in the fable.** A man and a lion travelling together began to boast of their respective superiority in strength. They passed a picture representing a lion strangled by a man. The traveller pointed to it and said, "See how strong we are, and how we overcome even the king of beasts". To which the lion replied, "This picture was painted by one of you men. If lions knew how to paint pictures, you would see the man put under the paw of the lion."

page 33, ll. 1, 2. **literature was even with them**, literature squared accounts with them by doing as much injury to them as it had suffered from them.

l. 4. **narrative of Mrs. Hutchinson**, the memoir of Colonel Hutchinson by his widow Lucy, not published till 1806. Colonel Hutchinson was governor of Nottingham during the Civil War.

l. 5. **May's History of the Parliament.** May, secretary to the Long Parliament, brings his history of it down to 1647 only. He died in 1650.

l. 7. **Ludlow** (1617–1693), a famous Republican, who acted as a member of the High Court by which Charles I. was tried and condemned. He was offered an appointment under the Commonwealth, but refused to recognize Cromwell as Protector, and went into exile. He died at Vevey, on the banks of the Lake of Geneva. He wrote Memoirs.

l. 9. **Oldmixon** (1673–1742) wrote a dull partisan history of England. He is satirized by Pope in the *Dunciad* (book ii., 283).

Catherine Macaulay (1731–1791), a Radical writer, whose history of England dealt with the period 1603–1715. She was so violently partisan in her history that she provoked the wrath of Dr. Johnson. On hearing that she had taken to painting her face, he remarked it was better she should redden her own cheeks than blacken other people's characters.

l. 13. **Clarendon.** Edward Hyde (1608-1674), Lord Chancellor from 1660 to 1667, wrote "that History of the Great Rebellion which was to teach four generations of Englishmen to look with admiration upon the Royalist cause". (S. R. Gardiner in *The Puritan Revolution*, p. 117.) His history is especially famous for its word portraits of contemporaries.

l. 14. **Hume,** David (1711–1776), the famous Scotch philosopher, wrote a history of England of charming style, but of little value, because of his decided bias in favour of authority.

§ 53.

page 34, l. 13. his creature Laud. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who by his High Church policy, did much to rouse both Scotland and England against Charles I. He was impeached in the Long Parliament in 1641, and was executed in 1645.

§ 54.

l. 25. **the present year.** 1825, when the controversy about Catholic Emancipation was at its height. The Whig party and a liberal section of the Tories were in favour of the repeal of the laws disqualifying Catholics from sitting in Parliament and holding certain offices, while the general body of the Tories opposed the repeal, and defended their policy of resistance by referring to the action of William III. at the Revolution.

page 35, ll. 4, 5. Their labour must be, &c. *Paradise Lost*, i. 164, 165.

§ 55.

l. 10. **One sect,** the Roman Catholics.

l. 12. **One part of the empire,** Ireland.

l. 20. **Naples,** &c. Naples and Spain were about this time so badly governed that there were constant conspiracies and insurrections in these countries, and intervention was found necessary on the part of other European States (*v.* note on page 32, ll. 20, 21).

South America. See note on p. 32, l. 18.

l. 21. **the doctrine of Divine Right.** This theory, put forth by the Stuarts, was to the effect that kings were the vicegerents of God on earth, appointed by Him, and responsible to Him alone. J. R. Green says that James I. adopted this theory through a misunderstanding of the phrase 'absolute sovereign', which formerly meant merely a king free from dependence on foreign powers, *e.g.* the Pope.

l. 23. **the *alias* of Legitimacy.** The Legitimists hold that the right of birth is the one sufficient and indefeasible title to rule. Their doctrine may be regarded as that of Divine Right under another name, as both are based on the idea that a king is king solely 'by the grace of God', and in no way 'by the will of the people'.

l. 24. **William:** William III.; so also in line 34 below.

l. 25. **Somers and Shrewsbury,** both connected with the Revolution, and ministers of William III. Somers defended the Seven Bishops, and became Lord Chancellor. Shrewsbury was one of those who signed the invitation to William in 1688. He became Secretary of State under William. His character is excellently portrayed in S. Weyman's novel *Shrewsbury.*

l. 31. **the glorious and immortal memory,** the phrase commonly used in drinking to the memory of William III. Macaulay here refers to the inconsistency of the Tories, who in England denounced William III. as the usurper of James II.'s throne, and in Ireland idolized him as the champion of Protestantism.

l. 34. **the arbitrary Charles.** Charles I.

Ferdinand the Catholic. Ferdinand V. of Castile married Isabella of Arragon. He did much to secure the unity of Spain. In his reign the Inquisition was established.

page 36, l. 1. Frederic the Protestant. Frederic, the Elector Palatine, son-in-law of James I. of England. He was at the head of the Protestant Union of Germany, and by his acceptance of the crown of Bohemia in 1619, gave rise to the war between Protestants and Catholics, commonly called the Thirty Years' War.

§ 56.

ll. 10, 11. **Goldsmith's Abridgment.** Goldsmith's *History of England* is mere hack work, and of no value whatever as a history. Goldsmith's fame as a writer of a charming novel (*The Vicar of Wakefield*), and a couple of brilliant comedies (*The Good-natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*), was sufficient to make popular a history that possessed no intrinsic merits.

§ 57.

ll. 34, 35. **the confessions of the King himself.** Macaulay here exaggerates. Charles I. always maintained that he had merely defended the prerogatives of the Crown as they had existed before his accession.

page 37, l. 9. **the Declaration of Right.** The different articles of this important State document are passed in review in the following sentences. They were the conditions on which William and Mary were offered the crown, and they were embodied in the Bill of Rights in 1689.

§ 58.

l. 27. **ship-money.** Charles had claimed a right to levy this on the strength of the practice of the kings in the time of the Danish Invasions. The refusal of Hampden to pay this had led to one of the most important incidents before the outbreak of the Civil War—the decision in the law-courts against Hampden in 1638. Ship-money was declared illegal by the Long Parliament in 1641.

l. 28. **The Star Chamber** had been established by Henry VII. as a special court for the trial of nobles and others who might be too powerful for the ordinary courts. It had been used by the Stuarts, and especially by Charles I., as the most powerful engine for establishing and enforcing despotic power. It was abolished by the Long Parliament in 1641.

l. 29. **Provision had been made,** &c., by the Triennial Act of 1641.

page 38, l. 3. **a disputed succession.** The Pretender being the claimant as against the House of Brunswick.

l. 4. **twenty years of foreign and intestine war.** The wars with France from 1689 to 1697, and from 1702 to 1713, together with the Jacobite rising of 1715.

l. 5. **a standing army.** This was considered a great evil in William III.'s reign, especially by the Tories. Their insisting on the reduction of the army in 1697, after the Treaty of Ryswick, caused William much annoyance.

a national debt; begun in 1693.

ll. 8, 9. **They could not trust the King.** Mr. S. R. Gardiner is of Macaulay's opinion: "It is useless to ask whether they might not have regulated the King's authority instead of shattering it. It was their business to shatter it because, with Charles on the throne, it was impossible to regulate it." (*The Puritan Revolution*, p. 114.)

§ 59.

ll. 19, 20. **the conduct of Charles with respect to the Petition of Right.** The Petition of Right was a declaration of certain rights which had been violated by Charles, and which were to be respected in future. Charles gave an evasive answer when it was first presented to him, but the Commons declined to grant the money he wished (five subsidies, a subsidy being about £70,000), unless he gave his assent in the usual formula. Then he pronounced the words 'Le Roi le veut'. But the right of levying tonnage and poundage—an old prerogative of the crown—was not expressly limited, and Charles continued to levy it. The Commons remonstrated, thinking it had been made illegal by the Petition of Right, a view that "an impartial tribunal would fail to justify by the wording of the Petition" (S. R. Gardiner in the *Puritan Revolution*, p. 62).

§ 60.

page 39, l. 3. **le Roi le veut** (the King wishes it), the formula by which the royal assent is given to a measure passed by both Houses of Parliament. It is a survival of the time when, under Norman influence, French was the language of the court and all official bodies.

§ 62.

ll. 33, 34. **the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates.** Archbishop Laud. This is a good example of Macaulay's exaggerating for the sake of rhetorical effect.

page 40, l. 6. **Vandyke dress.** The best-known portrait of Charles I. is by Vandyke (1599–1641), a native of Flanders, the greatest portrait-painter of his time. The portrait represents Charles in a doublet of white satin, with large loose sleeves, the collar covered by a falling band of the richest point-lace, with a peculiar edging, that is now called Vandyke.

§ 64.

l. 29. **Hume.** See note on par. 51.

page 41, l. 2. **his own recent release,** his own discharge or quittance of what he had considered the prerogatives of the Crown.

§ 66.

l. 10. **take issue**—originally a legal phrase. It is used of two parties who take up a positive and a negative position respectively on

a point in debate. An 'issue' is a single, definite, material point in law or fact.

l. 14. **Strafford.** Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford (1593–1641), was till 1629 a supporter of the Parliament against the king. He was the ablest minister of the king during the tyranny (1629–1640), and was distinguished especially for his administration in Ireland—a system which came to be known as "Thorough". He was fixed upon by the leaders of the Long Parliament as the most important person to be put out of the way if their struggle with the king was to have any chance of proving successful. He was at first proceeded against by impeachment, but as this method seemed doubtful in its issue, it was abandoned for attainder. The Bill of Attainder was passed by both Houses, and Charles, in spite of his promise to Strafford that not a hair of his head should be injured, gave his assent to it, and Strafford was executed (1641).

ll. 14, 15. **violence of the army,** *e.g.* in seizing the king's person in 1647 without authority from Parliament, and in the expulsion of members of the House of Commons in 1648, commonly called Pride's Purge.

l. 15. **Scriptural names.** Barebone, *e.g.*, had for first name "Praise God", while he is said to have had a brother with the name "If Christ had not died for thee thou wert damned"; but as the name was too long he was commonly known by the last word.

l. 16. **Major-generals.** After the discovery of plots against the Commonwealth in 1655, England was divided into ten military districts, each under the charge of a major-general. These officers had practically unlimited powers, and levied heavy fines on all who had taken any part in the frustrated conspiracies.

ll. 20, 21. **boys smashing,** &c. A good instance is Christ Church, Oxford, where one of the windows consists of a collection of coloured fragments.

ll. 21, 22. **Quakers riding naked,** &c. "Some travelled and preached naked or barefoot or dressed in sackcloth; even the women in some cases distinguished themselves by the impropriety and folly of their conduct. In some cases religious excitement seems to have produced or been attended by insanity, and the aberrations of Naylor and Ibbit can only be attributed to that cause" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, art. 'Quakers'). Similar stories are told of the effect of fanaticism on the Fakirs of India and an order of the Dervishes in Turkey. Mr. R. Davey, in his book on *The Sultan and his Subjects* (published in 1897), says he himself saw a Dervish, only three years before, "wandering stark naked about the streets of Constantinople" (vol. i. p. 84).

l. 22. **Fifth-monarchy-men.** A sect which expected the immediate coming of Christ to reign on the earth. There had been four great world-monarchies already as foretold in the Book of

Daniel—Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman—and the millennium or thousand years' reign of Christ prophesied in the Book of Revelation was looked forward to as the fifth world-monarchy. Sir Henry Vane was of this sect, and his attempts to inaugurate 'the reign of saints' brought him into trouble with Cromwell (*v.* note on par. 83).

l. 23. **agitators**, or (more correctly) *adjutators*, persons chosen by the army in 1647 to watch over its interests and control the Parliament at Westminster. Two privates or inferior officers were elected from each troop.

l. 24. **Agag**, the king of the Amalekites, spared by Saul but put to death by Samuel (*1 Samuel* xv. 32).

§ 67.

ll. 26, 27. **We are not careful**, &c. The sentence is taken from *Daniel* iii. 16.

l. 30. **despotic sceptres.** This phrase has been substituted in the collected edition of Macaulay's *Essays* for a more rhetorical but less accurate one in the original essay—'the sceptres of Brandenburg and Braganza'. There was little but the alliteration to justify these two names being taken to stand for 'despotism'. By 'the sceptre of Brandenburg' is meant the royal family of Prussia, the Elector of Brandenburg (a province of Prussia) having attained the higher rank of King of Prussia in 1701. By 'the sceptre of Braganza' is meant the royal family of Portugal, the name being taken from a town in Portugal.

ll. 33–35. **It is the nature of the Devil of tyranny**, &c. The same excuse has been put forward for the excesses of the French Revolution. The metaphor, carried on in the words 'possession' and 'exorcism', is a good example of Macaulay's fondness for Biblical language and illustrations.

§ 68.

page 42, l. 24. **the key of knowledge.** Another Biblical phrase (*Luke* xi. 52).

§ 69.

ll. 33, 34. **Rhine or the Xeres.** These are in the most famous vine-growing districts in Germany and Spain respectively. Xeres, from which we have our word 'sherry', is, however, not a river, but a town in the province of Andalusia.

page 43, l. 17. **sophisms**, plausible arguments intended only to mislead.

§ 70.

l. 19. **Ariosto**, *v.* note on par. 47. The story is in *Orlando Furioso*, canto 43.

§ 71.

In this paragraph we reach the fifth illustration Macaulay gives of "the outrages which accompany revolutions". If the comparison be worked out in each case, it will be found that the same point of view is not maintained throughout.

§ 73.

page 45, l. 7. the Regicides, the men constituting the court by which Charles I. was tried and condemned. The most famous were Cromwell, Bradshaw, Ludlow, Ireton, Harrison, and Hutchinson.

l. 18. **Jefferies,** or Jeffreys, the chancellor of James II. He earned his notoriety by the severity he showed towards those put on trial after the suppression of Monmouth's rebellion in 1685. His circuit in the west was known as the Bloody Assize, there being over 300 sentenced to death by him.

l. 20. **at the Boyne.** The battle of the Boyne, which ruined James's cause in Ireland, was fought on July 1, 1690. But James was not in the battle. "He watched from a safe distance the beginning of the battle...When it became clear that the day was going against Ireland, he...galloped towards Dublin." (Macaulay's *History*, cap. xvi.) The argument may have been suggested to Macaulay by a passage in Milton's *Defence of the English People*, in which he quotes from Cicero *pro Rabirio*: "If it were criminal to put Saturninus to death, arms could not, without a crime, have been taken up against him; but if you allow the justice of taking up arms against him, you must allow the justice of putting him to death".

page 46, l. 2. fifth of November, the anniversary of William's landing at Torbay (1688).

ll. 5, 6. **thirtieth of January,** the anniversary of the execution of Charles I. (1649). The sentence is made up of phrases taken from the Forms of Prayer (with their titles), formerly in use in the Church of England, for these two anniversaries.

§ 74.

l. 21. **The Presbyterians** had no objection to Charles II. as they had had to Charles I., because the son readily subscribed his name to the Covenant—a thing the father had steadily refused to do. Charles II. was crowned at Scone in 1650, and the Presbyterians of Scotland (at least the majority of them) were henceforth Royalists.

§ 75.

page 47, l. 8. the book of Salmasius. The *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I.* was written in 1649 by Claude de Saumaise (in Latin, Salmasius), professor at Leyden, and the most famous scholar of

his time on the Continent. It was the work of "a mere classical scholar", and was answered by Milton in his *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*, a defence of the English people.

ll. 8, 9. **That miserable performance.** It may be questioned if Milton's was much better. Johnson quotes with approval the judgment of the philosopher Hobbes: "They are very good Latin both, and hardly to be judged which is better; and both very ill reasoning, hardly to be judged which is worse; like two declamations *pro* and *con*, made for exercise only in a rhetoric school by one and the same man".

l. 12. **Æneæ magni dextra,** 'the right hand of the great Æneas'. Æneas is the hero of Virgil's great epic, the *Aeneid*, from which book the quotation is taken (x. 830). When Æneas has given a mortal wound to Lausus he tells the dying man that it is some consolation to him to know that he falls 'by the right hand of the great Æneas'.

§ 76.

page 48, l. 3. a Venetian oligarchy. The republic of Venice was in the middle ages, and even till its fall at the end of last century, governed by a few families who formed an exclusive caste. The phrase has become widely known through Disraeli applying it in his novels to the clique of Whig families who engrossed all power in England after the succession of the Brunswick dynasty.

l. 6. **a constitution far more perfect,** &c. The Instrument of Government, drawn up in 1653 by a council of officers, and accepted by Cromwell on his becoming Protector in that year, deserves this praise. There is a close parallel between this constitution and the constitution drawn up by the descendants of the Puritans in America. In both there is that separation of the executive and the legislative which is the distinguishing mark of presidential government (as in America) from cabinet government (as in Britain). Cromwell the Protector was in very much the same position as a President of the United States.

l. 12. **a Dutch stadtholder.** The President of the Confederation of the United Provinces.

l. 21. **Washington** (1732–1799) showed his moderation by refusing a third term of office as President of the United States.

Bolivar (1783–1830), the hero of the War of Independence waged against Spain by her colonies in South America. He has been called the Washington of South America. The country, Bolivia, takes its name from him.

l. 25. **his parliaments questioned the authority,** &c. The parliament which met in 1654 devoted all its time to such discussions, and provoked Cromwell to dismiss it as soon as the time fixed by the constitution for its sitting had elapsed.

§ 77.

page 49, l. 23. the Humble Petition and Advice. A modification of the constitution contained in the Instrument of Government. It was drawn up and presented to Cromwell in 1657. The most important change was that having for its object the assumption of royal power by Cromwell.

§ 78.

This paragraph is quoted by Mr. Frederic Harrison in his *Early Victorian Literature* as the most glaring example of Macaulay's *megalomania*, or taste for exaggeration. "This is vigorous invective, in the style of Cicero against Catiline, or Junius attacking a duke; it is brilliant rhetoric and scathing satire. At bottom it has substantial truth, if the attention is fixed on Whitehall and the scandalous chronicle of its frequenters. It differs also from much in Macaulay's invectives, in being the genuine hot-headed passion of an ardent reformer only twenty-five years old. It is substantially true as a picture of the Court at the Restoration; but in form how extravagant, even of that! Charles II. is Belial; James is Moloch; and Charles is *propitiated* by the blood of Englishmen! Charles, easy, courteous, good-natured, profligate Charles...Watch Macaulay banging on his antithetic drum—'servitude without loyalty, and sensuality without love'—'dwarfish talents and gigantic vices'—'ability enough to deceive'—'religion enough to persecute'. Every phrase is a superlative; every word has its contrast; every sentence has its climax. And withal, let us admit that it is tremendously powerful, that no one who ever read it can forget it, and few ever who have read it fail to be tinged with its fury and contempt. And, though a tissue of superlatives, it bears a solid truth, and has turned to just thoughts many a young spirit prone to be fascinated by Charles's good-nature, and impressed with the halo of the divine consecration of kings."

page 50, l. 16. a viceroy of France. By the Treaty of Dover in 1670 Charles II. became a pensioner of the French king on condition of his showing favour to Roman Catholics, and declaring himself a Roman Catholic when a suitable opportunity might arrive.

l. 23. **Anathema Maranatha.** *Anathema*, a Greek word, meaning 'devoted (to the gods)', hence 'accursed'. *Maranatha*, a Syriac word, meaning 'our Lord cometh'. Both together mean 'the object of greatest detestation'.

l. 25. **Belial and Moloch.** *Belial*, a Hebrew word meaning worthlessness or wickedness, hence the Spirit of evil, Satan. But Milton makes him one of the fallen angels—

> Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd
> Fell not from heaven.—*Par. Lost*, i. 490.

Moloch (=king), chief god of the Phenicians, whose worship consisted in human sacrifices, mutilations, passing through the fire, &c.

> First Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
> Of human sacrifice and parents' tears.—*Par. Lost*, i. 392.

Charles II. is referred to as Belial because of his licentiousness. James II. is spoken of as Moloch because of his cruelty, as displayed, for example, in the suppression of Monmouth's rising.

l. 31. **a by-word and a shaking of the head**, &c. A Biblical phrase from *Psalm* xliv. 14.

§ 79.

page 51, ll. 18, 19. **when Cromwell was inaugurated** as Protector of the Commonwealth in 1653, and again in 1657.

l. 20. **Tyburn.** The place in East London where criminals were executed. Cromwell's body was dug up and hanged there after the Restoration.

ll. 20, 21. **dined on calves' heads.** The Calves' Head Club, instituted in ridicule of Charles I., held an annual banquet on the 30th of January. The feast consisted (among other things) of a boar's head with an apple in its mouth to represent the king preying on his subjects, and of calves' heads dressed in different ways to represent Charles in his various kingly offices. The essay in its original form ran thus: "Who dined on calves' heads or on broiled rumps, and cut down oak-branches or stuck them up". The change was necessary because of the meaningless antithesis in the last clause. There results, however, a loss in pointedness in the first clause. 'Broiled rumps' were eaten in ridicule of the remnant of the Long Parliament, which was nicknamed the *Rump* after many of the members had been forcibly excluded by the officers of the army.

l. 21. **oak-branches**, the symbol of loyalty to Charles II., from the story of his wonderful escape after the battle of Worcester. Oak-leaves were commonly worn on 29th May, the anniversary of Charles's birthday and of his entry into London in 1660.

§ 80.

ll. 29, 30. **He that runs may read them.** Adapted from *Habakkuk* ii. 2.

page 52, ll. 5, 6. **the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists.** Dryden may be taken as an example of such dramatists, and Butler, author of *Hudibras*, as an example of the satirists.

l. 11. **polite amusements**, the amusements of a refined society. 'Polite' is used here in its original Latin sense of 'polished' or 'civilized'. So we have still the phrase 'polite learning'.

ll. 18–21. **Ecco il fonte**, &c. "Here is the fountain of laughter,

and here is the stream which contains in itself deadly perils; here it is most befitting to us to put the curb on our desires and to be careful."

§ 81.

page 53, ll. 4, 5. Bassanio in the play. In the *Merchant of Venice*, Portia's father had devised a scheme for finding out the true lover. In his will he directed three caskets of gold, silver, and lead to be made. The suitor who should choose aright would find, in the casket he selected, the portrait of Portia. The first suitors to choose—the Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Arragon—being attracted by the showy gold and silver, found, the former a death's head, and the latter a fool's head. Bassanio chose the leaden casket, and found in it 'the treasure', Portia's portrait.

§ 82.

ll. 12, 13. they habitually ascribed every event, &c. This belief is called the belief in a particular providence.

l. 34. The Book of Life. See *Revelation* xxi. 27.

page 54, ll. 1–4. The sentence is made up from *St. Matthew* iv. 6, 11, and xxvi. 53; *2 Corinthians* v. 1; and *1 Peter* v. 4.

§ 83.

page 55, l. 3. Beatific Vision, the direct sight of God in heaven. The letters of Cromwell, or Bunyan's autobiography, *Grace Abounding*, would illustrate all these characteristics of the Puritans.

l. 4. Vane. Sir Henry Vane (1615–1662), one of the most prominent men on the side of the Parliament. He was a close friend of Pym and Hampden. He was executed in 1662. He was opposed to Cromwell's government, and aimed at establishing the reign of the saints or the Fifth Monarchy (*v.* par. 66).

l. 6. Fleetwood, one of the Parliamentary generals, and son-in-law of Cromwell.

l. 27. Stoics, a school of philosophers among the Greeks and Romans who held that the highest good was complete indifference to things of this world, and that the good man should be unmoved by feelings of joy or sorrow. The remarkable thing about the Puritan was that he attained this desired indifference not by suppressing the feelings, but by the strength of one of them, enthusiasm.

l. 32. Sir Artegal's iron man Talus. Sir Artegal, the hero of book v. of the *Faerie Queen*, and the personification of Justice, was presented by Astræa, the goddess of Justice, with her groom Talus. This Talus was an iron man who ran continually round the island of Crete to punish offenders with an iron flail. He represents the executive power of a State—"swift as a swallow, and as a lion strong".

§ 84.

page 56, l. 11. **anchorites**, hermits; from Greek, *anachoretes*, one who retires (from the world).

l. 12. **crusades**, religious wars of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, carried on by Christendom against Mohammedans, the special object being to rescue the Holy Land from the latter. (Latin 'crux', a cross.) The war against Spain (1655–1658) was the nearest approach to a religious war waged by the Puritans. An attempt was also made during the Commonwealth to form a Protestant League against the Catholics. Cromwell stood out as the champion of Protestantism in the incident of the persecution of the Vaudois by the Catholic House of Savoy.

Dunstan (924–988), Archbishop of Canterbury, a great church statesman like Wolsey in later times. Born at Glastonbury, he spent some time at Court, but being ill-used, he became a monk at his birthplace, and was noted for the austerity of his life. On the accession of a new king, Edmund, he was recalled to Court, and devoted himself to the reform of the church, insisting in particular on the celibacy of the clergy.

De Montfort (c. 1160–1218), father of Simon de Montfort, 'the founder of the English parliament'. He was notorious for the severity with which in 1208 he crushed the Albigenses, heretics in the south of France, who wished to repudiate the authority of the Pope.

l. 13. **Dominic** (1170–1221) was associated with De Montfort in the war against the Albigenses. He is best known as the founder of a new order of Friars, the Black Friars or Dominicans.

Escobar (1589–1669), a Spanish Jesuit, chiefly noted for his writings on casuistry, *i.e.* the discussion of difficult questions of morals and justice. He maintained that purity of intention justifies actions which are in themselves immoral. In spite of the looseness of his views, however, he was noted for the strictness with which he carried out the rules of his order, and is therefore mentioned here by Macaulay as an example of austerity.

§ 85.

ll. 23, 24. **doubting Thomases.** *St. John* xx. 24.

l. 24. **careless Gallios.** *Acts* xviii. 17, "Gallio cared for none of those things".

l. 28. **Plutarch**, a Greek author, who wrote parallel lives of Greeks and Romans. They were arranged in pairs, *e.g.* Alexander and Cæsar, Demosthenes and Cicero.

l. 30. **Brissotines**, a party of moderate Republicans in the French Revolution, so called from their leader, Brissot. They are otherwise known as Girondists, most of them having come from the Gironde, or south-west of France.

§ 86.

page 57, l. 6. **Whitefriars**, a district in London, between the Thames and Fleet Street, so called from a monastery of Carmelites or White Friars which formerly stood in Water Lane. From the monastery it derived certain rights of sanctuary, so that it became the resort of dissolute and lawless characters. The outrages committed by these men led to the abolition of the privilege in 1697. The district is otherwise called Alsatia. See Scott's novel *The Fortunes of Nigel.*

l. 13. **honest old Cavaliers.** The typical example is Sir Edmund Verney. "I have eaten the king's bread and served him now thirty years, and I will not do so base a thing as to distrust him."

l. 16. **mutes**, dumb officers, usually attached to seraglios.

l. 17. **Janissaries**, from Turkish *yeni*, new, *tcheri*, soldiers. They formed the body-guard of the Sultan till 1826, when, rising against him, they were completely destroyed.

l. 30. **Duessa**, 'the double or false one', the foul witch in Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (book i. cantos 2–8) who assumes the form of Una, 'the single or true one', and so beguiles Una's champion, the Red Cross Knight, into the House of Pride.

page 58, ll. 7, 8. **Round Table**, the legendary order of chivalry formed by King Arthur and his knights, Launcelot, Gawain, &c.

§ 87.

l. 20. **conventicle**, a religious meeting not held in a church, but in any sort of building, or even in the open air. The Puritans held such irregular and unauthorized meetings.

Gothic cloister, an ecclesiastical building in the Gothic style of architecture. The cloister (L. *claustrum*, a fastening) was strictly an arcade round the open courts of the larger religious edifices. Milton may have often been in a 'Gothic cloister' during his residence at Cambridge, King's College Chapel being such an edifice. "The exquisite lines on ecclesiastical architecture and music in the *Penseroso*" are in every point applicable to that famous chapel and its service.

l. 21. **the gloomy and sepulchral circles of the Roundheads**, an exaggeration for rhetorical effect. The lives of the better sort of Puritans, as Colonel Hutchinson, Cromwell, &c., refute this description.

l. 22. **Christmas revel**, a very appropriate allusion, for in 1652 the Puritan parliament 'abolished' Christmas; there was "fiery persecution of poor mince-pie throughout the land, when plum-porridge was denounced as 'mere popery', and roast beef as anti-Christian" (W. Irving, *Sketch-book*).

l. 27. **as ever in his great task-master's eye.** The quotation is from Milton's Sonnet "On being arrived at the age of twenty-three".

page 59, l. 14. the hero of Homer. Ulysses, the hero of the *Odyssey*, an epic poem in which Homer describes the adventures of Ulysses on his voyage home after the Trojan war. One of these adventures was listening to the song of the Sirens, maidens who sat on the shore and sang with such sweetness as to allure the passing sailors to draw near, but only to their own destruction. Ulysses, having been previously warned by Circe, stuffed the ears of the sailors with wax, and had himself tied to the mast. Thus he listened to the song of the Sirens, but escaped the usual fate.

ll. 17, 18. **the cup of Circe.** Circe was a sorceress having such skill in drugs as to change men into the lower animals. When Ulysses visited her she changed twenty-two of his companions into swine, but he himself escaped, having received from Mercury 'a sure antidote' to her drugs—the herb Moly.

l. 24. **treatises on Prelacy.** *Of Reformation in England; Prelatical Episcopacy; Reason of Church Government; Animadversions on the Remonstrant.*

ll. 25, 26. **exquisite lines, &c.**

> But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloister's pale,
> And love the high-embowed roof,
> With antique pillars massy proof,
> And storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.
> There let the pealing organ blow
> To the full-voiced choir below,
> In service high and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstasies
> And bring all heaven before mine eyes.

l. 32. **the noble Othello,** the chief character in Shakespeare's play, *Othello, the Moor of Venice.* Othello's frank, manly, but simple nature is worked upon by the villain Iago, who gets him to believe that his wife Desdemona has been false to him. Moved by jealousy, Othello, though he still loves his wife, murders her. He afterwards says, "he did nought in hate, but all in honour".

§ 88.

page 60, l. 23. the malignants, the name applied by the Puritans to their opponents, whom they regarded as harbouring ill-will to the good cause—the cause of religion.

l. 24. **the heedless brothers**, the two brothers in *Comus* had, by their negligence, allowed their sister to fall into the hands of the sorcerer Comus, and having traced him out they rushed on him "with swords drawn" and drove him away. But they forgot the main point of their instructions, to "seize his wand".

ll. 29, 33. **Oh, ye mistook**, &c. *Comus*, 815–819.

§ 89.

l. 35. **to spell the charm backward.** The superstition that the power of magical incantations could only be broken by the charm being recited backward, is as old as Ovid.

> "Verbaque dicuntur dictis contraria verbis."
> (*Metamorphoses* xiv. 301.)

page 61, l. 4. **he joined the Presbyterians.** In his pamphlet, *Reason of Church Government against Prelacy* (1641), Milton leaned to Presbyterianism as a better form of church government, but in 1643, in his Sonnet on the 'New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament', he says:

> New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large.

ll. 8, 9. **He joined the Independents**, the religious sect that advocated the formation of separate self-governing congregations *independent* of any other church authority. In his Sonnet to Cromwell, Milton says:

> Peace hath her victories
> No less renowned than War; new foes arise
> Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
> Help us to save free conscience from the paw
> Of hireling wolves whose gospel is their maw.

The Presbyterians had just obtained a Parliamentary ordinance for the punishment by death of all who should refuse to abjure certain heresies.

l. 13. **licensing system.** The system under which no book could be published without having been first authorized by a censor appointed by Government. The *Areopagitica* is 'the sublime treatise' in which Milton denounces the system.

ll. 14, 15. **as a sign upon his hand**, &c. From *Exodus* xiii. 16; *Deuteronomy* vi. 8, and xi. 18.

§ 90.

page 62, l. 7. **He stood up for divorce** in his *Treatise on the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* in 1644, addressed to the Parliament and the Westminster Assembly of Divines. But there was a

good deal of personal motive in this; his own wife, Mary Powell, had refused to live with him. See note on p. 3, ll. 9, 10.

Here in the original essay occurs the sentence, "He ridiculed the Eikon". It was struck out by Macaulay, no doubt because of the weakness of this example of Milton's courage relatively to the other instances given. The *Eikon Basilike* (image of the king) was a book put out as containing meditations, prayers, &c., of Charles I. The authorship was popularly attributed to the king himself, but the work seems really to have been due to Gauden, Bishop of Exeter. Milton's book *Eikonoklastes* (the image-breaker) was an answer to the *Eikon*.

l. 8. **He attacked the prevailing systems of education** in his *Tractate on Education* (1644).

ll. 11, 12. **Nitor in adversum.** Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, ii. 72, 73. "I strive against an opposing power: the force, which overcomes all other things, overcomes not me, and I am borne along in an opposite direction to the swiftly moving world." The words are put into the mouth of Phoebus, 'the god of light', when Phaethon had asked him that he might be allowed to drive the chariot of the Sun.

§ 91.

This paragraph may have been suggested by a clumsy and obscure sentence of Dr. Sumner's, to which it forms an interesting and instructive contrast: "There is much reason for regretting that the Prose Works of Milton, where, in the midst of much that is coarse and intemperate, passages of such redeeming beauty occur, should be in the hands of so few readers, considering the advantage which might be derived to our literature from the study of their original and nervous eloquence".

l. 18. **Burke** (1729–1797). Edmund Burke is regarded as unrivalled for the splendour and magnificence of his political writings. He is certainly underrated by Macaulay in this passage. Lowell, the American critic, rates Burke far higher than Milton as a writer of political pamphlets. He says that "with the single exception of the *Areopagitica* Milton's tracts are wearisome reading. No aphorisms of political science are to be gleaned from his writings as from those of Burke. . . . Burke could distil political wisdom out of history because he had a profound consciousness of the soul that underlies and outlives events, and of the national character that gives them meaning and coherence. Accordingly, his words are still living and operative, while Milton's pamphlets are strictly occasional and no longer interesting, except as they illustrate him." The student should form his own opinion by reading the description of Marie Antoinette, the peroration of the Speech against Warren Hastings, or the conclusion of the second Speech on Conciliation with America, beginning "My hold of the colonies is in the close

affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron, &c." The best passages of Milton's prose are in the *Areopagitica* and the *Reason of Church Government*. Macaulay's judgment of Milton's prose is often quoted, but it is marked by his characteristic exaggeration. Matthew Arnold has pointed out the defects of Milton's prose arising from the mistaken attempt to construct periods in English, an analytic language, on the model of those in Latin, a synthetic language.

ll. 25–27. **his own majestic language**, &c. "The Apocalypse of St. John is the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies." (*Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy*, book ii.)

§ 92.

ll. 30, 31. **the sublime wisdom of the Areopagitica**, *e.g.* "Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them." "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit." "As good almost kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye."

l. 33. **Treatise of Reformation**, a pamphlet written in the controversy caused by the debates in Parliament in 1641 on Church Reform. Milton supported the Root and Branch party, which advocated the complete abolition of Episcopacy.

l. 34. **Animadversions on the Remonstrant**, a reply to Bishop Hall's *Defence of his Humble Remonstrance*, a pamphlet Hall had written against the petition presented to Parliament against Episcopacy. Mr. Stopford Brooke speaks of Milton's pamphlet as being "tiresome and as coarse as Swift in his coarser mood. A few passages of great nobility succour the weary reader."

§ 93.

page 63. l. 8. **his festival**, *i.e.* saint's day, as in the Calendar of the Church. The words 'relic' and 'shrine' are also used about Milton as though he were a saint.

l. 27. **with his daughters.** By all accounts they did not think it a privilege, but on the contrary vexed their father by their unwillingness.

ll. 27, 28. **Quaker friend Elwood.** Thomas Elwood, in 1662, obtained liberty to come to Milton's house, "when I would, and to read to him what books he should appoint me, which was all the favour I desired". In 1665 Milton showed Elwood the manuscript

of *Paradise Lost*, and told him to take it home and read it at his leisure. On returning it, says Elwood, "I pleasantly said to him, 'Thou hast said much here of Paradise Lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise Found?'" Afterwards Milton showed him his *Paradise Regained*, and said, "This is owing to you; for you put it into my head by the question you put to me, which before I had not thought of".

§ 94.

page 64, l. 4. **Boswellism**, the hero-worship that James Boswell showed to Dr. Johnson. It was so extravagant that Macaulay considered it a weakness. Carlyle, on the other hand, regarded it as a sign of Boswell's genuineness, and as the source of his greatness. Carlyle's view is generally adopted now, and certainly the author of the best biography in the language (as Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is) must have possessed some rare qualities. Macaulay's dictum, "If he had not been a great fool, he would not have been a great writer", is only remembered as the most glaring instance of his astonishing errors in criticism.

l. 6. **tried in the furnace**, &c., *Psalm* xii. 6.

l. 7. **weighed in the balance**, &c., *Daniel* v. 27.

ll. 15, 16. **the Virgin Martyr**, a character in the play of that name by Philip Massinger (1584–1640), a contemporary of Shakespeare's. Dorothea, the Virgin Martyr, is put to death by Theophilus, a zealous persecutor of the Christians. From Paradise she sends Angelo (a good spirit who had served her in the guise of a page) with a basket filled with fruit and flowers, in fulfilment of a promise she had made to Theophilus before her martyrdom. Theophilus, beholding the basket, says:

> 'Tis a tempting fruit
> Sweet-smelling, goodly fruit. What flowers are these!
> In Dioclesian's gardens, the most beauteous
> Compared with these are weeds. . . . Sweet boy, say,
> In what country shall a man find this garden?

On tasting the fruit he exclaims:

> What dainty relish on my tongue
> This fruit hath left! some angel hath me fed;
> If so toothsome, I will be banqueted.

An evil spirit tries to dissuade him from eating of the fruit and threatens him, but Angelo, the good spirit, encourages him, and promises to bring him 'to that garden where these blest things grow'. The miracle brings about his conversion, and he dies a martyr at the hands of the Emperor Diocletian.

APPENDIX

VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT OF THE ESSAY.

[The student should try to find out the reason for every change made by Macaulay. He will find that invariably there is greater clearness in the amended text. The pronouns in particular will be found to suffer change. "Macaulay has a perfect hatred of pronouns, and for fear of a possible entanglement between 'hims' and 'hers' and 'its', he will repeat not merely a substantive but a whole group of substantives; sometimes, to make his sense unmistakable, he will repeat a whole formula with only a change in the copula" (Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, 3rd series, p. 308).]

p.	l.	*Revised Text.*	*Original Text.*
2.	19.	The author	He
	30.	We may apply to him what Denham with great felicity says of Cowley	What Denham with great felicity says of Cowley, may be applied to him
3.	2.	Milton	He
	7.	doctrines	opinions
	9.	theory	notions
4.	1.	until	till
	34.	in consideration of	for
5.	7.	much	his
	16.	fervently admire	admire
	35.	that hoard	it
6.	28.	of a change	a change
	30.	is indispensable to	in
7.	5.	Shaftesbury; he	Shaftesbury. He
	26.	not all	not of course all
9.	10.	scarce	not
		without falling	without almost falling
	27.	the poet.	it
11.	13.	his genius gives	the richness of his fancy and the elevation of his sentiments give

p.	l.	*Revised Text.*	*Original Text.*
11.	29.	fuel	its fuel
12.	23.	the	his
13.	14.	translate into his own diction	rewrite
	29.	novel	moral (*a misprint*)
	30.	scenes	scenery
		region	country
14.	14.	stanza	canto
	17.	Both are	They are both
15.	23.	is discernible	is clearly discernible
16.	14.	Euripides	he
	15.	our countryman	him
	18.	this	his
	20.	Milton	he
17.	28.	he afterwards neglected	he neglected.
	29.	his masque	it
19.	2.	we readily	we must readily
	7.	Our limits, however	But our limits
20.	11.	Let	Now, let
22.	12.	resident at	now actually resident in
23.	12.	men	mankind can never feel an interest in them. They
	22.	in speculation	speculatively.
25.	13.	that the spirits should be clothed	for him to clothe his spirits
	14.	the poet	he
	17.	Milton	he
	18.	the reader	his readers
		immateriality from their thoughts?	it from his thoughts?
	21.	half belief	quasi-belief
26.	7.	a fault	a fault indeed.
	8.	Dante's	his
	10.	The	His
	12.	the interest	the mysterious interest
	13.	to the ghosts	with his ghosts
	16.	Dante's	His
27.	9.	of the Oriental	of the vagueness and tenor (*misprint for* terror) of the Oriental
	13.	The legends of Aeschylus	His legends
	27.	Prometheus	He
28.	11.	unintermitted	unintermittent
	28.	spirit	thought
29.	3.	turned	twined (*a misprint*)
	17.	belong	belonged

p.	l.	*Revised Text.*	*Original Text.*
29.	29.	scaffolds. Venal.	scaffolds. That hateful proscription, facetiously termed the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion, had set a mark on the poor, blind, deserted poet, and held him up by name to the hatred of a profligate court and an inconstant people. Venal
30.	2.	that fair Muse	his Muse
	5.	rout	rabble
	6.	they	it
31.	27.	Liturgy. The	Liturgy: the
32.	8.	and of an	and an
	23.	an unwonted	a strange and unwonted
	31.	friends of liberty	Roundheads
	35.	the Roundheads	they
33.	4.	narrative	memoir
	7.	foolish	very foolish
	30.	grounds. We	grounds; we
	33.	We are entitled to that vantage ground;	It is a vantage ground to which we are entitled;
	35.	are not unwilling	have no objection
34.	13.	creature	miserable creature
	19.	merciless	stupid and ferocious
35.	1.	delight. If some good end has been attained in spite of them, they feel	delight. They cannot always prevent the advocates of a good measure from compassing their end; but they feel
	20.	America. They	America! they
36.	8.	case; nor	case. Nor
	17.	meaning; and	meaning. And
37.	17.	debate;	debate.
	18.	the	The
		violated; arbitrary	violated. Arbitrary
	20.	daily	daily and hourly
38.	2.	are in the habit of praising	praise
	9.	laws; but	laws. But
	11.	prerogatives;	prerogatives.
	12.	but	But
	13.	The nation	They
	19.	compared to	compared, for wickedness and impudence, to
	25.	assent; the subsidies are voted; but	assent. The subsidies are voted. But

p.	l.	*Revised Text.*	*Original Text.*
39.	1.	to our fathers	them for liberty
	20.	Oliver	even Oliver
40.	16.	relations; and	relations. And
41.	30.	despotic sceptres.	the sceptres of Brandenburgh and Braganza.
42.	9.	nation	people
	18.	heads of the church	rulers in the church
	19.	The government	They
	20.	it had done its	they had done their
	23.	our rulers	they
	29.	some time	for some time
	30.	generally	always
44.	16.	contend	conflict
46.	3.	William	King William
	9.	we disapprove, we repeat,	we do not, we repeat, approve
48.	16.	enactments; and	enactments. And
49.	35.	His death	For his death
50.	20.	policy of the state. The government	measures of a government which
51.	15.	fickle	such fickle
	21.	or stuck up oak-branches	or on broiled rumps, and cut down oak-branches and stuck them up
	24.	deserve	deserved
53.	6.	fix on	fix our choice on
	21.	his	the
	24.	and the meanest	and meanest
	34.	they were recorded	they felt assured that they were recorded
56.	20.	acted	co-operated
57.	35.	fought, but	fought; but
58.	9.	tenderness, and respect	tenderness and respect
	17.	Royalist	Cavalier
60.	19.	should be	be
62.	8.	regicide. He attacked	regicide. He ridiculed the Eikon. He attacked
	22.	the great poet	he
63.	12.	writer	great poet
64.	14.	pleasant	refreshing
	19.	superior	their superior
		miraculous	their miraculous

SPECIMEN QUESTIONS.

1. What circumstances gave rise to the Essay on Milton, and what effect had its publication on Macaulay's position and career?
2. "The poet is born, not made." Milton feared he was "born an age too late". Compare these two views, and show precisely how environment affects the poet.
3. Stopford Brooke says: "Allusiveness is a characteristic mark—often a fault—of Milton's poetry". Illustrate and criticise this statement.
4. What are the characteristics of Lyric and Dramatic Poetry? Why is it difficult to combine them, and how far has Milton overcome the difficulty in Comus and Samson Agonistes?
5. Illustrate the influence of the Greek drama on Milton's poetry.
6. What truth is there in the statement that Milton's poetry is distinctly personal while Shakespeare's is absolutely impersonal?
7. Give a summary and criticism of Macaulay's comparison of the Paradise Lost and the Divine Comedy.
8. "Logicians may reason about abstractions. Men must have images." Discuss this assertion.
9. Compare the spiritual creations of Milton with those of Æschylus, and illustrate specially by the Satan and the Prometheus.
10. Compare Milton and Dante with respect to (*a*) worldly circumstances, (*b*) natural disposition.
11. What are the characteristics of Milton's (*a*) Sonnets, and (*b*) Prose Works?
12. Illustrate and account for the fact that up to 1825 Milton and the Puritans were misjudged with reference to their political conduct.
13. How far is the action of the Parliamentary party against Charles I. similar to that of the leaders of the Revolution against James II.? Are there any points of difference?
14. Discuss Charles I.'s conduct with regard to the Petition of Right, and criticise Macaulay's account of the matter.
15. "A good man but a bad king." Is the saying defensible?
16. How does Macaulay show that the good results effected by Revolutions may outweigh all the evils usually associated with them?
17. What can be said in defence of the execution of Charles I.? Was the treatment of James II. exactly parallel?
18. Was Milton's defence of Charles I.'s execution justifiable?
19. What points of similarity and difference are there between the rule of Charles I. and that of Cromwell?
20. What defence can be offered for Milton supporting Cromwell?
21. Give a summary and criticism of Macaulay's description of the Puritans.

22. What were the excellences and defects of the Cavaliers? Illustrate from the life of Royalists like Montrose, &c.
23. Show how Milton stands apart from, and above, all the parties of his time.
24. Illustrate Macaulay's assertion that Milton's peculiar glory was his single-handed fight for freedom of thought.
25. What is Macaulay's estimate of Milton's place in history? Is it justifiable?
26. Give examples of Macaulay's skill as an advocate.
27. What are the most remarkable characteristics of Macaulay's style? Give illustrations from the Essay.
28. What Figures of Speech does Macaulay use most frequently? Give examples.
29. Illustrate the importance of the Paragraph in Macaulay's writings.
30. "Mannerism is pardonable when the manner is natural." Discuss this with reference to Macaulay's own style.
31. Show how Macaulay sometimes sacrifices truth for the sake of rhetorical effect.
32. Minto says of Macaulay: "He discusses everything in the concrete". Illustrate this.
33. What are the devices used by Macaulay to add animation to his writings?
34. What are the more serious faults of Macaulay's style?
35. From what sources does Macaulay most commonly draw his illustrations? Give examples from the Essay.
36. Give illustrations of Macaulay's adaptation of Biblical phraseology, rhythm, and incidents.
37. Write notes explanatory of the following allusions, and show what use Macaulay makes of them: the tears of his Niobe; as much mistaken as Cassim; noxious Sardinian soil; a spell potent as that of Duessa; the *alias* of Legitimacy; the cup of Circe; cozened by *le Roi le veut*; who dined on calves' heads; the Queen of Fairyland kissed the long ears of Bottom.
38. Explain fully the following statements:
    (*a*) The adventures of Amadis differ from those of Gulliver.
    (*b*) The fasces of the Lictor were humbled in the dust.
    (*c*) St. George took the place of Mars.
    (*d*) He will not lose by comparison with Washington or Bolivar.
    (*e*) The specious caskets which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head.
    (*f*) They had their Dominics and Escobars.
    (*g*) Enthusiasm had made them Stoics.
    (*h*) He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision.

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